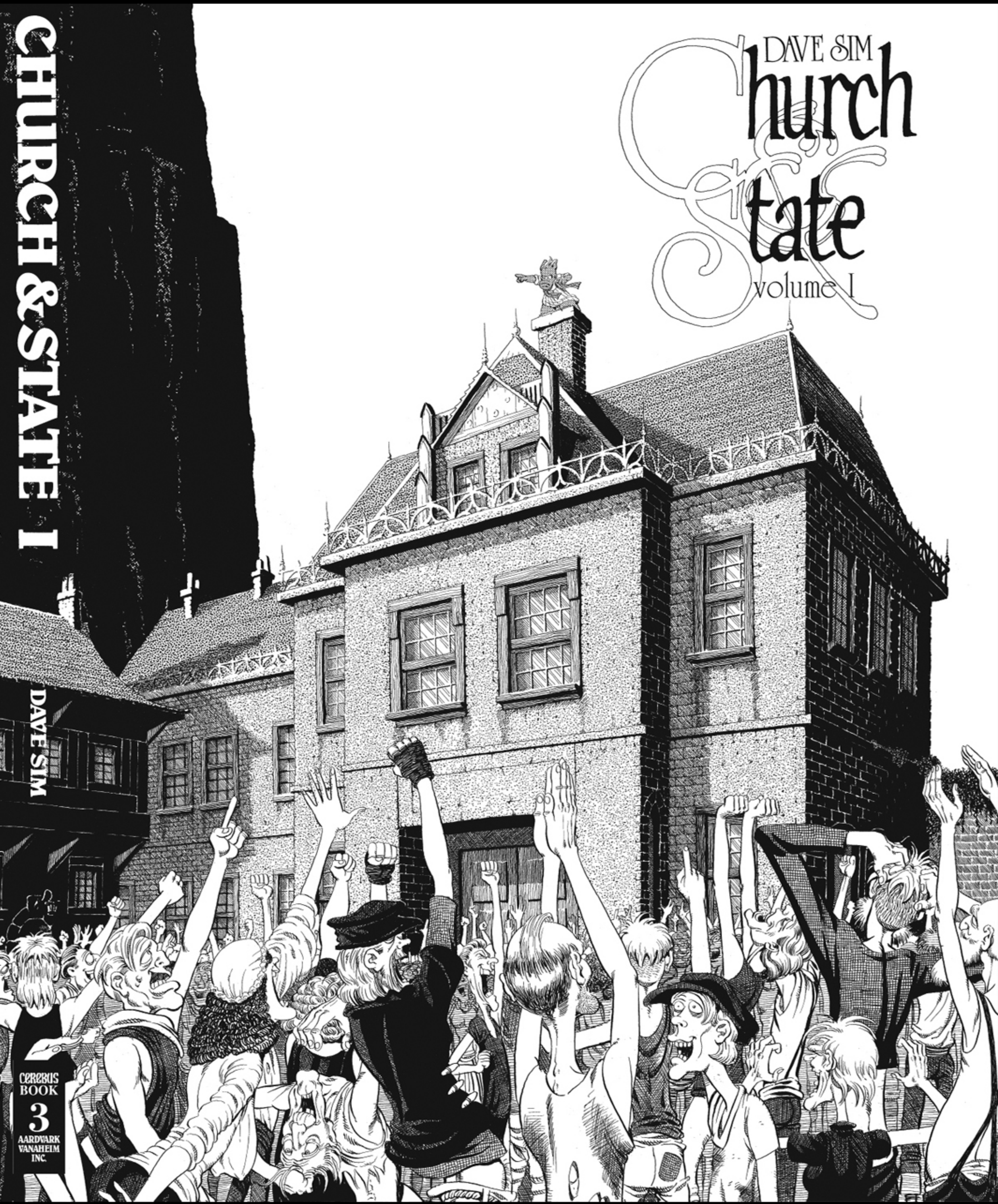
DAVE SIM

Church & State

volume I



CHURCH & STATE I

DAVE SIM

CEREBUS BOOK 3

AARDVARK VANAHEIM INC.

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from Dave Sim at fax no.
to the attention of: Anyone reading this Digital Edition of a CEREBUS trade

(I don't have e-mail and can only be contacted by escargot mail at Box 1674 Stn. C Kitchener Ontario, CANADA N2G 4R2)

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Sincere thanks to everyone who has devoted that most valuable of human commodities -- their time -- to reading my and Gerhard's work.

Dave Sim, creator, writer, co-artist

Gerhard does prints and commissions and can be contacted at gerhardart.com

CHURCH AND STATE

by

Dave Sim

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MALAYSIA

to Deni for her timely departure

to Gerhard for his timely arrival

and

to Jessica because somewhere it is
always January 23, 1984

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2,300 Words on the Restored Church & State I ii

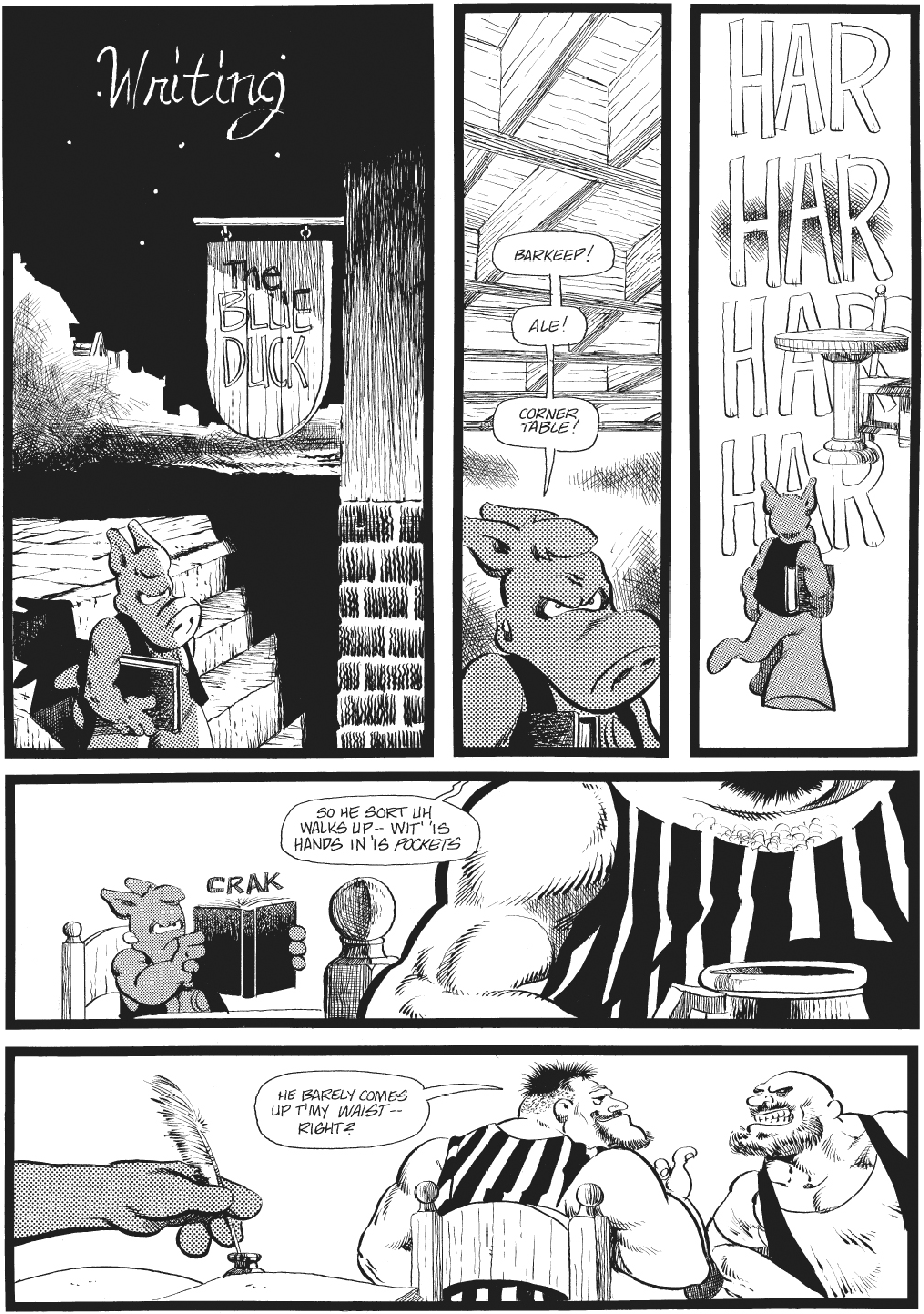
What you hold in your hands is the first half of a work-in-progress--that, as I write this, is a year and a half away from completion. It is also the third part of a larger work-in-progress that, as I write this, is fifteen years and some months from completion. This volume has a cliff-hanger ending. If you are the sort who is deeply offended by reading close to six-hundred pages that do not resolve themselves in a happily-ever-after, I would encourage you to put this book on a shelf out of your reach and wait (patiently or otherwise) for volume two which should see print sometime in 1989. Trust me. I'm dancing as fast as I can.

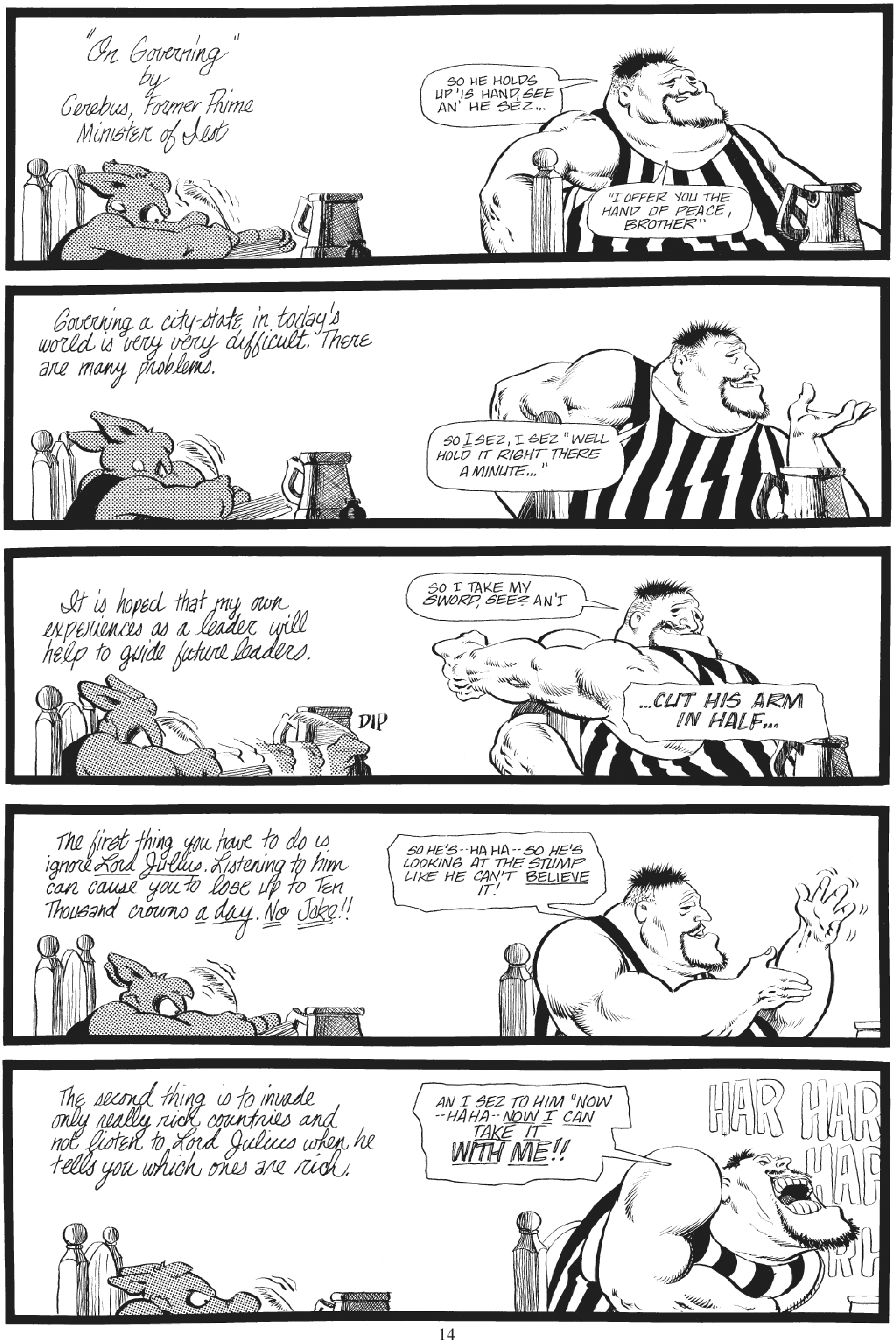
For those of you who purchased the previous volume **High Society**, the fictional city-state of Iest and many of the characters in **Church and State** will be familiar. Much of the religious background, settings and texts has been woven in ridiculous detail in my notebooks as this story evolved in Cerebus' monthly comic series. What has made it to the finished pages is a fraction of the resources created. Enough has been used to lend authenticity to the fiction. Enough has been left out to keep the story from reading like a term paper.

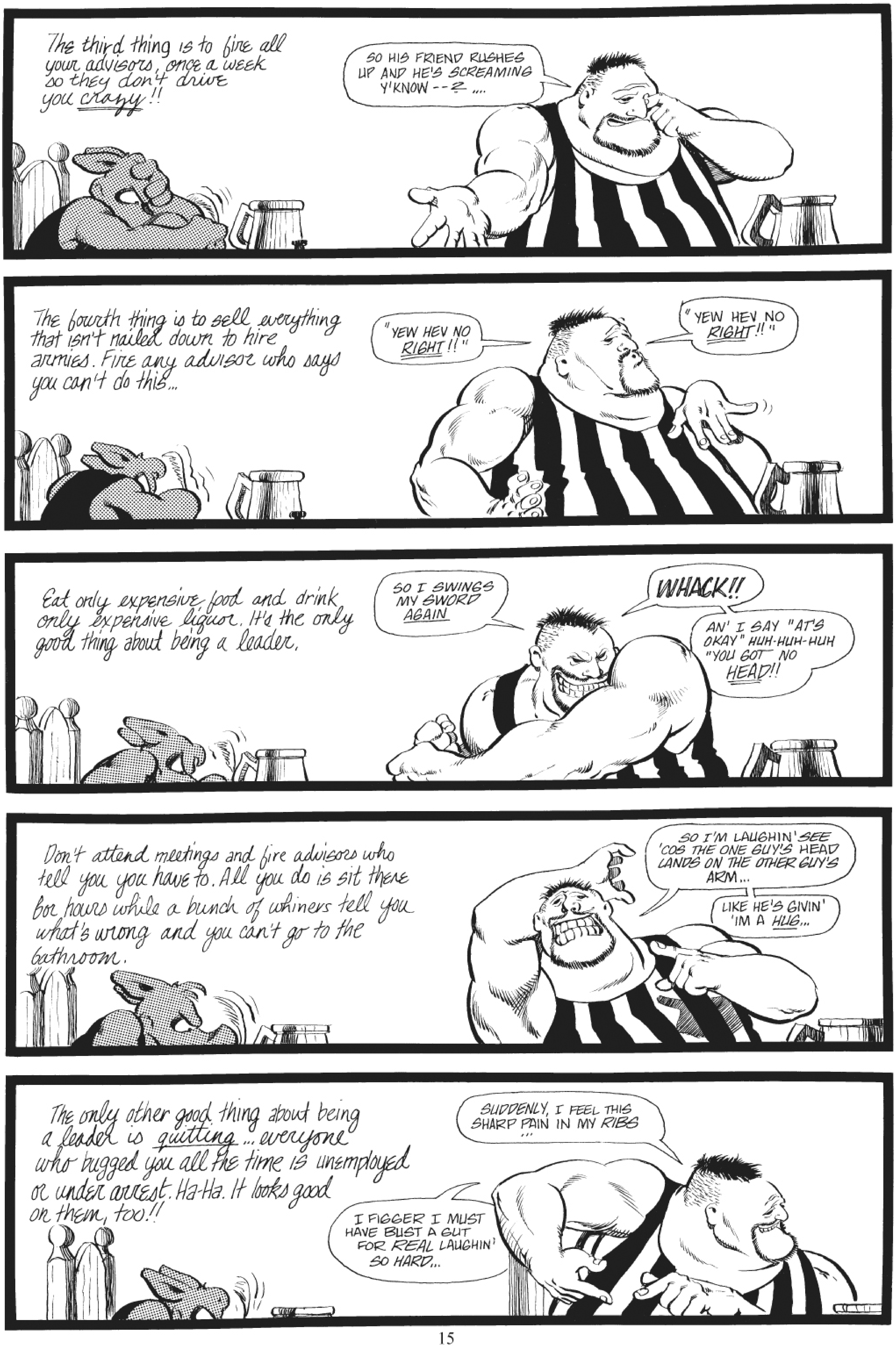
In much the same way that **High Society** reflected my genuine affection for the realities of political campaigning, elections and government, **Church and State** reflects a genuine affection for and interest in the effect of power on belief and vice versa. Those who find my observations to be distorted or insulting are encouraged to read any decent history of the papacy in the middle ages or watch reruns of Jim and Tammy. (I miss them already.)

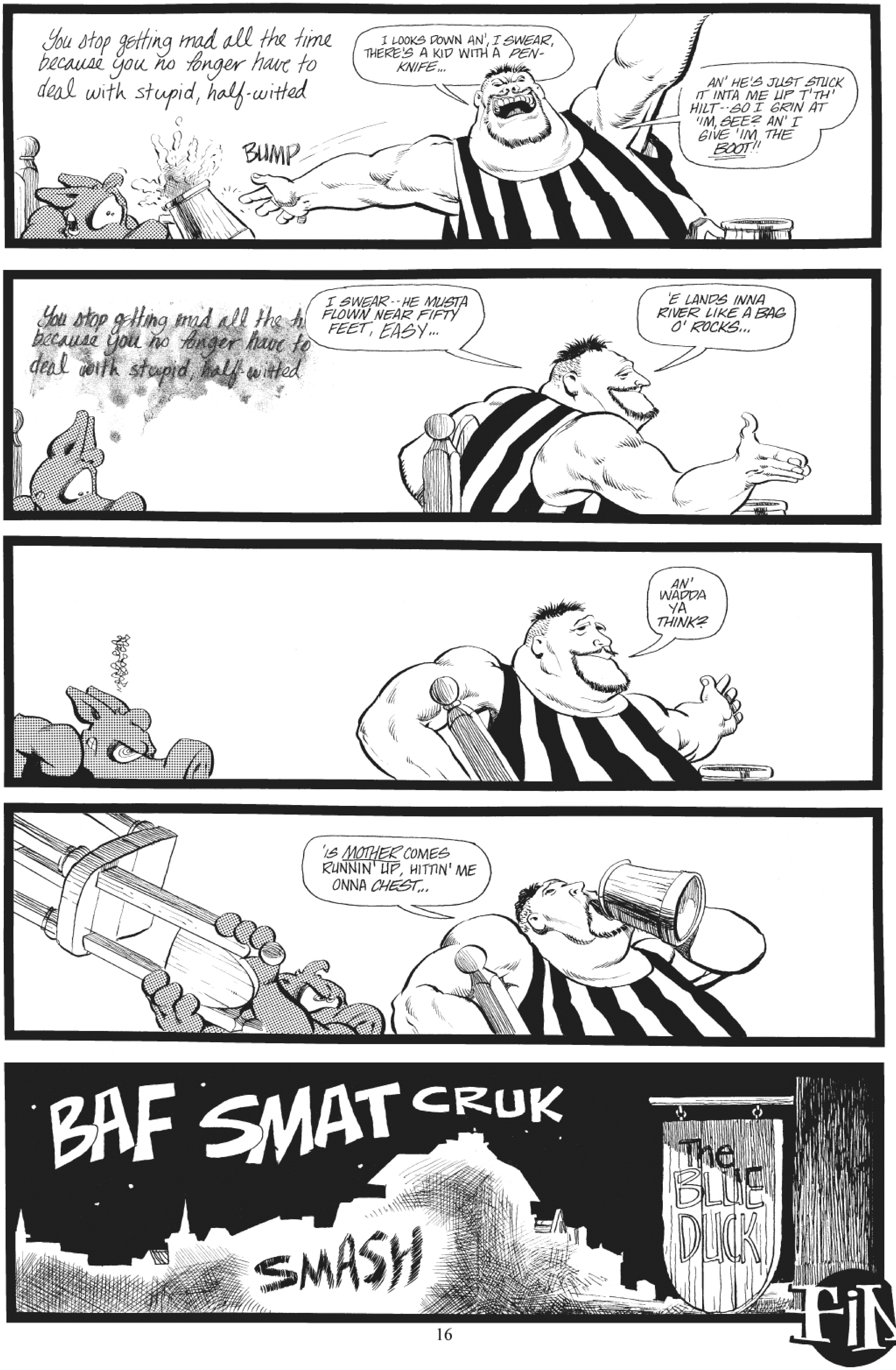
Dave Sim
April 26, 1987
Kitchener, Ontario

BOOK ONE
Après State


Writing
The BLUE DUCK
BARKEEP!
ALE!
CORNER TABLE!
HAR HAR HAR HAR HAR
SO HE SORT UH WALKS UP-- WIT' 'IS HANDS IN 'IS *POCKETS*
CRAK
HE BARELY COMES UP T'MY *WAIST*-- RIGHT?


"On Governing"
by
Cerebus, Former Prime Minister of Iest
SO HE HOLDS UP 'IS HAND, SEE AN' HE SEZ...
"I OFFER YOU THE HAND OF PEACE, BROTHER"
Governing a city-state in today's world is very very difficult. There are many problems.
SO I SEZ, I SEZ "WELL HOLD IT RIGHT THERE A MINUTE..."
It is hoped that my own experiences as a leader will help to guide future leaders.
SO I TAKE MY SWORD, SEE? AN' I
DIP
...CUT HIS ARM IN HALF...
The first thing you have to do is ignore Lord Julius. Listening to him can cause you to lose up to Ten Thousand crowns a day. No Joke!!
SO HE'S--HA HA--SO HE'S LOOKING AT THE STUMP LIKE HE CAN'T BELIEVE IT!
The second thing is to invade only really rich countries and not listen to Lord Julius when he tells you which ones are rich.
AN I SEZ TO HIM "NOW --HAHA-- NOW I CAN TAKE IT WITH ME!!
HAR HAR
HAR


The third thing is to fire all your advisors, once a week so they don't drive you crazy!!
SO HIS FRIEND RUSHES UP AND HE'S SCREAMING Y'KNOW --? ....
The fourth thing is to sell everything that isn't nailed down to hire armies. Fire any advisor who says you can't do this...
"YEW HEV NO RIGHT!!"
"YEW HEV NO RIGHT!!"
Eat only expensive food and drink only expensive liquor. It's the only good thing about being a leader.
SO I SWINGS MY SWORD AGAIN
WHACK!!
AN' I SAY "AT'S OKAY" HUH-HUH-HUH "YOU GOT NO HEAD!!
Don't attend meetings and fire advisors who tell you you have to. All you do is sit there for hours while a bunch of whiners tell you what's wrong and you can't go to the bathroom.
SO I'M LAUGHIN' SEE 'COS THE ONE GUY'S HEAD LANDS ON THE OTHER GUY'S ARM...
LIKE HE'S GIVIN' 'IM A HUG...
The only other good thing about being a leader is quitting... everyone who bugged you all the time is unemployed or under arrest. Ha-Ha. It looks good on them, too!!
SUDDENLY, I FEEL THIS SHARP PAIN IN MY RIBS ...
I FIGGER I MUST HAVE BUST A GUT FOR REAL LAUGHIN' SO HARD...


You stop getting mad all the time because you no longer have to deal with stupid, half-witted
I LOOKS DOWN AN', I SWEAR, THERE'S A KID WITH A PEN-KNIFE...
AN' HE'S JUST STUCK IT INTA ME UP T'TH' HILT--SO I GRIN AT 'IM, SEE? AN' I GIVE 'IM THE BOOT!!
BUMP
You stop getting mad all the ti because you no longer have to deal with stupid, half-witted
I SWEAR--HE MUSTA FLOWN NEAR FIFTY FEET, EASY...
'E LANDS INNA RIVER LIKE A BAG O' ROCKS...
AN' WADDA YA THINK?
'IS MOTHER COMES RUNNIN' UP, HITTIN' ME ONNA CHEST...
BAF
SMAT
CRUK
The BLUE DUCK
SMASH
FIN

Cerebus the Aardvark

"On Governing"

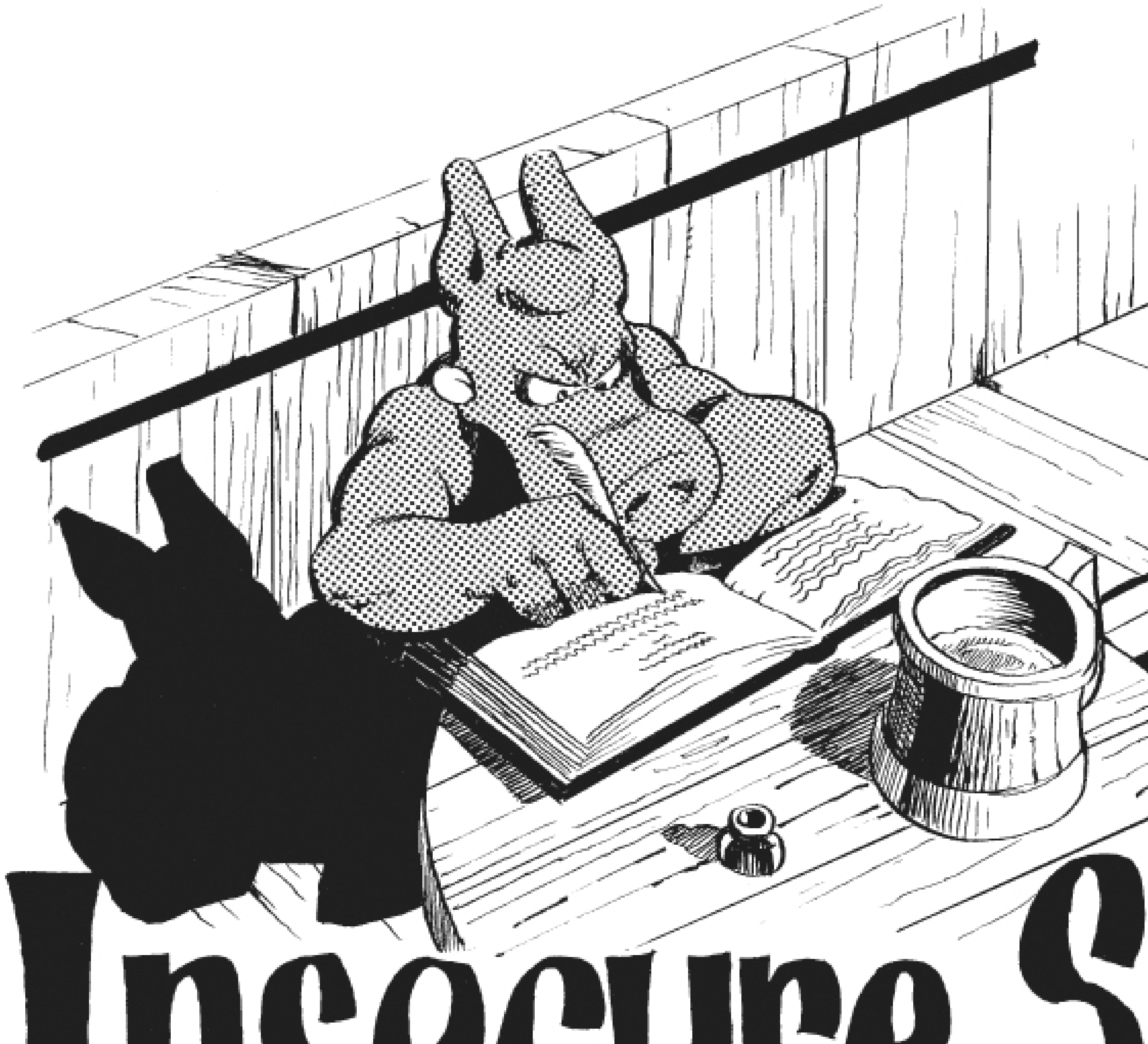
by

Former Prime Minister Cerebus of Iest

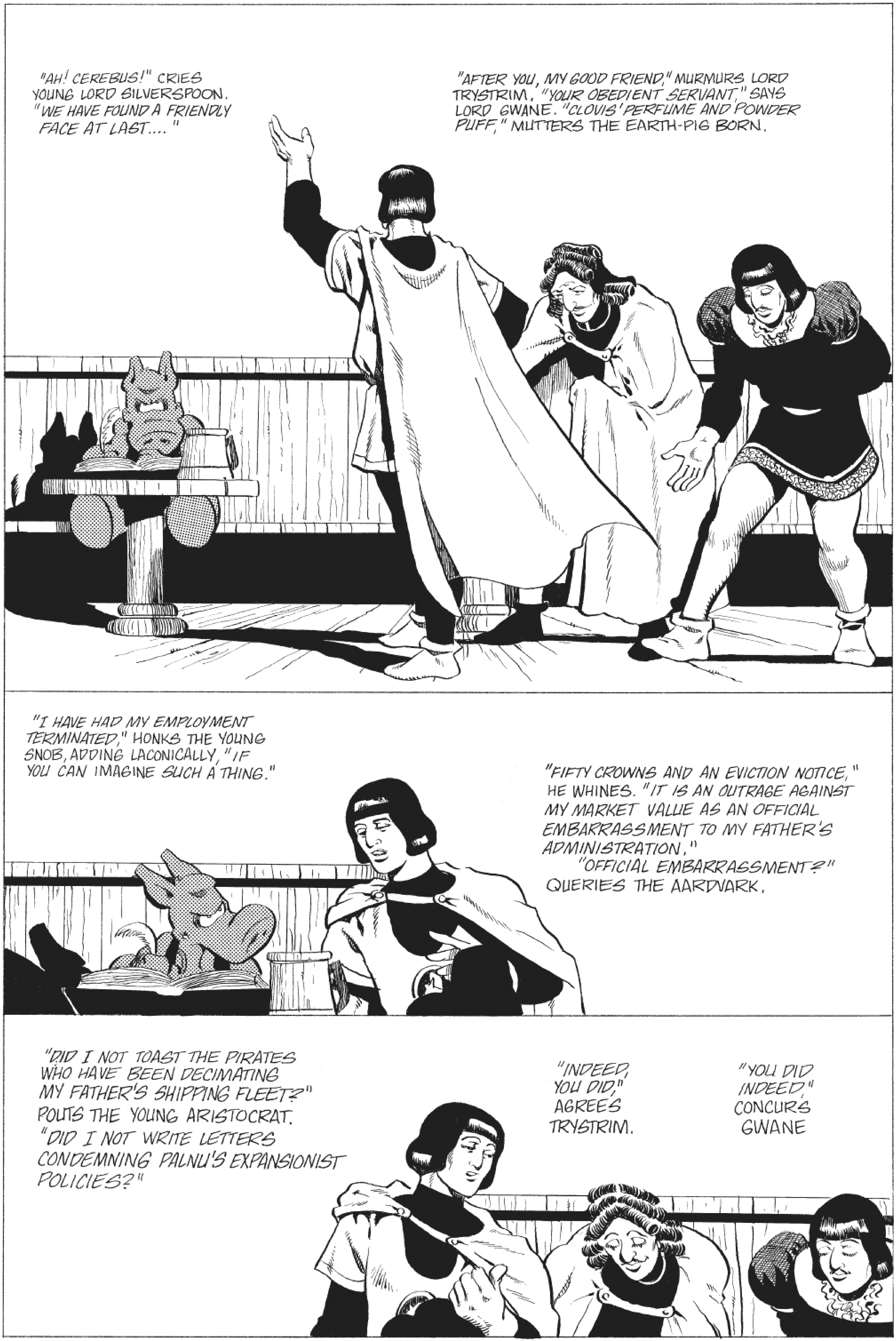
PART the SECOND

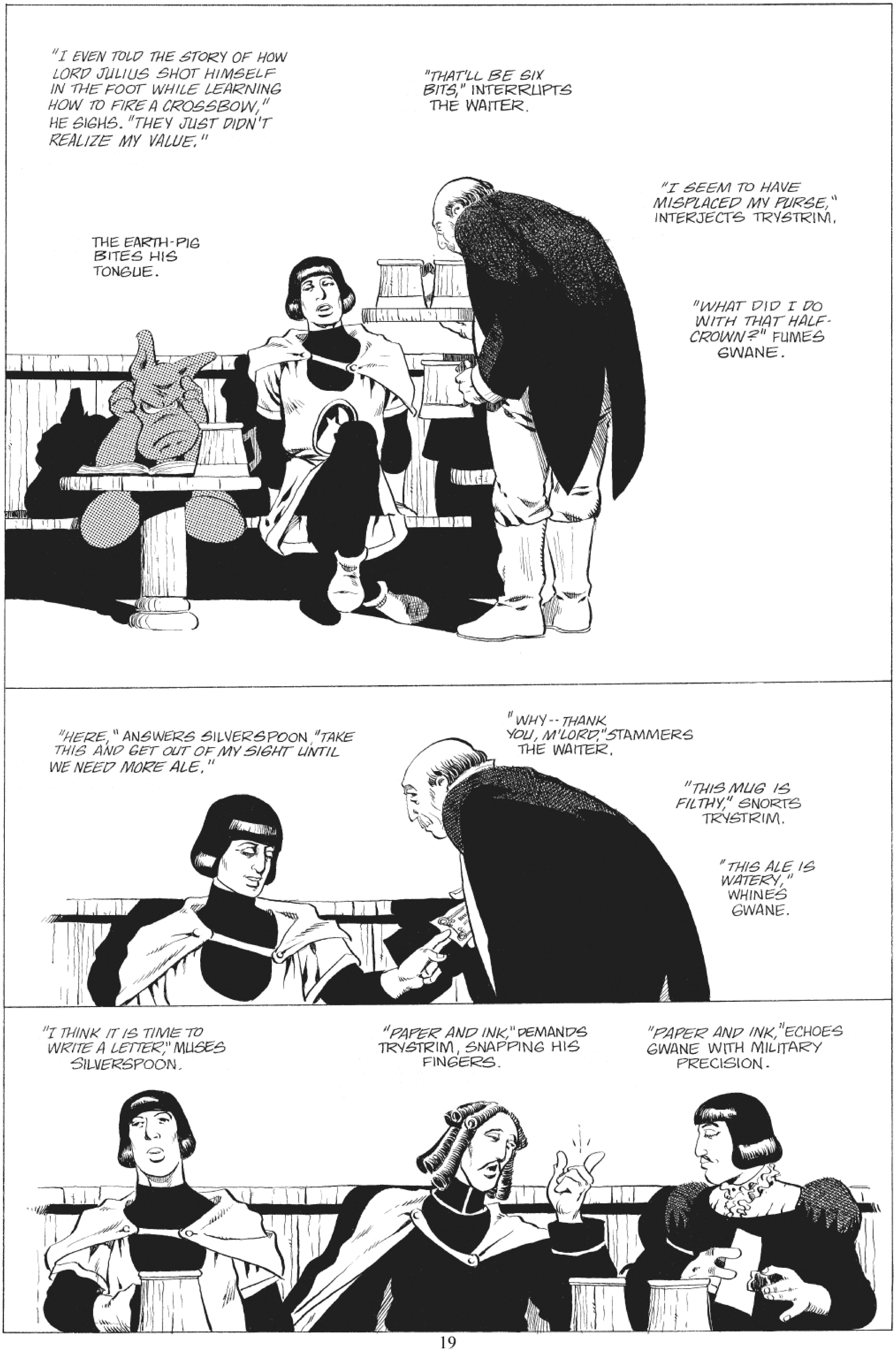
The biggest thing you have to do is stop listening to people, except when they are telling you facts. As soon as they start saying opinions, you should stop listening. They always tell you that what you decided isn't going to be popular and then they ask you if you want to change your mind. I used to change my mind all the time when they said this, but then Cerebus started thinking; Why don't they just do what they're told? They wanted someone to make decisions, so they have an election, okay? okay. It's like five guys out in the woods. And three of them say "so-and-so will be the leader". Okay? Okay. Now you've settled it. When so-and-so says "As leader, I think we should go this way" you don't stop and argue. That's why you made him leader. Cerebus thinks that after you vote, you should shut up and do as you're told or go to jail. Period. Otherwise nothing gets done.

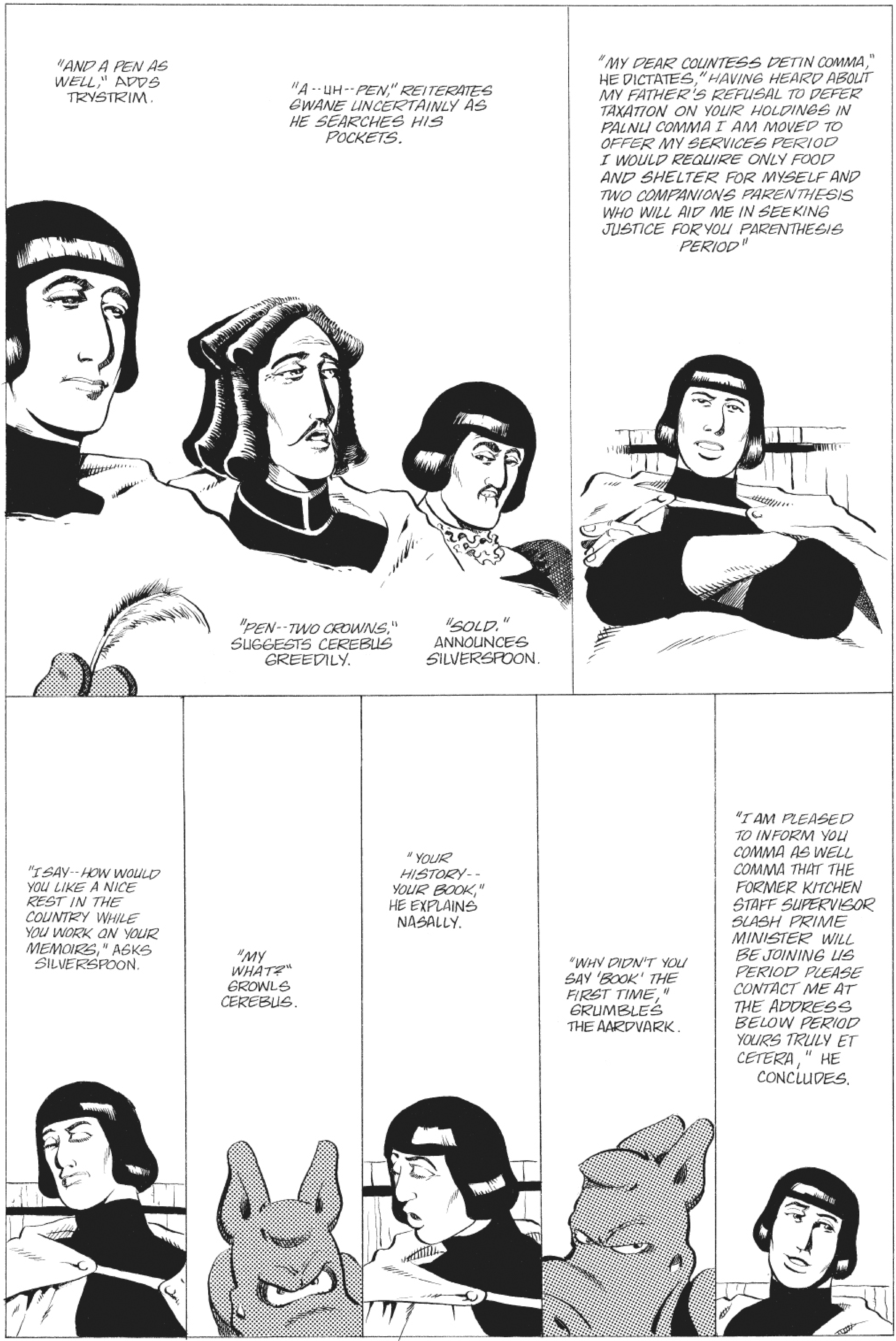
Be careful, too, about farting around your butler. You shouldn't fart around anyone, really, because they start stammering and stuttering and you never find out what they were going to say and if you yell at them for stammering, they wet their pants. But especially not your butler, because if you fart when he's bringing you your soup, he spills it all over you.

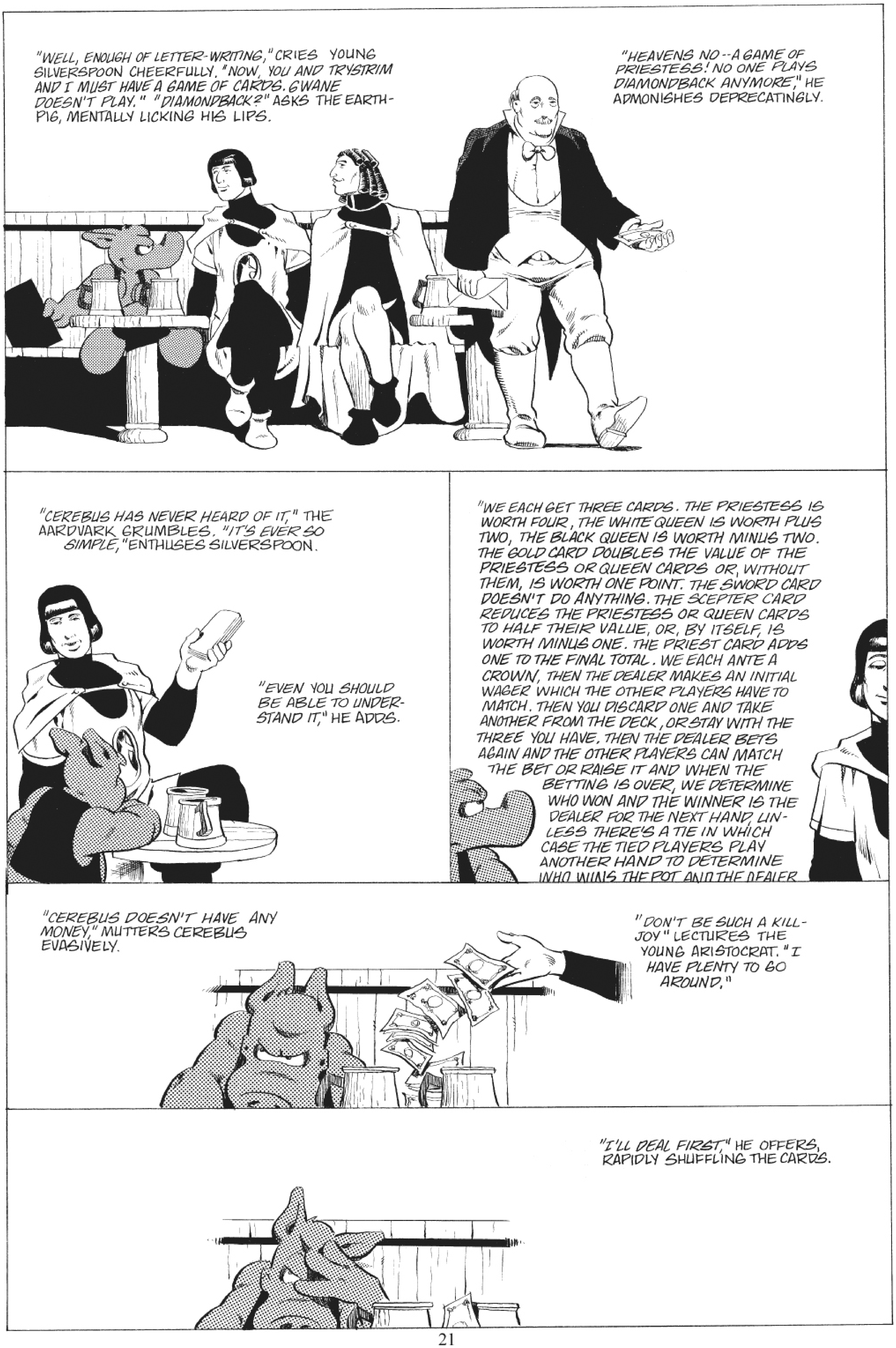


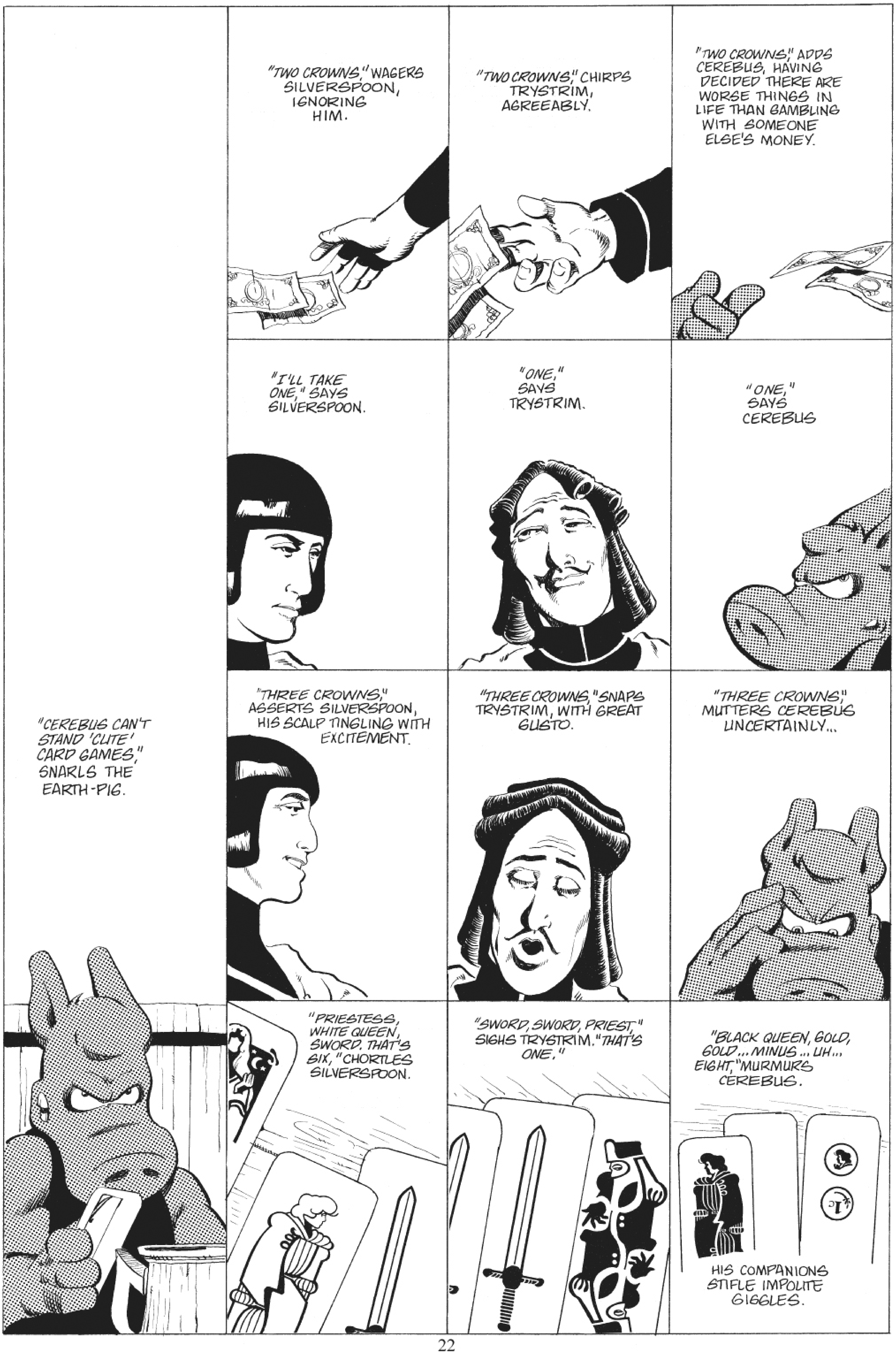
the Insecure Sinecure

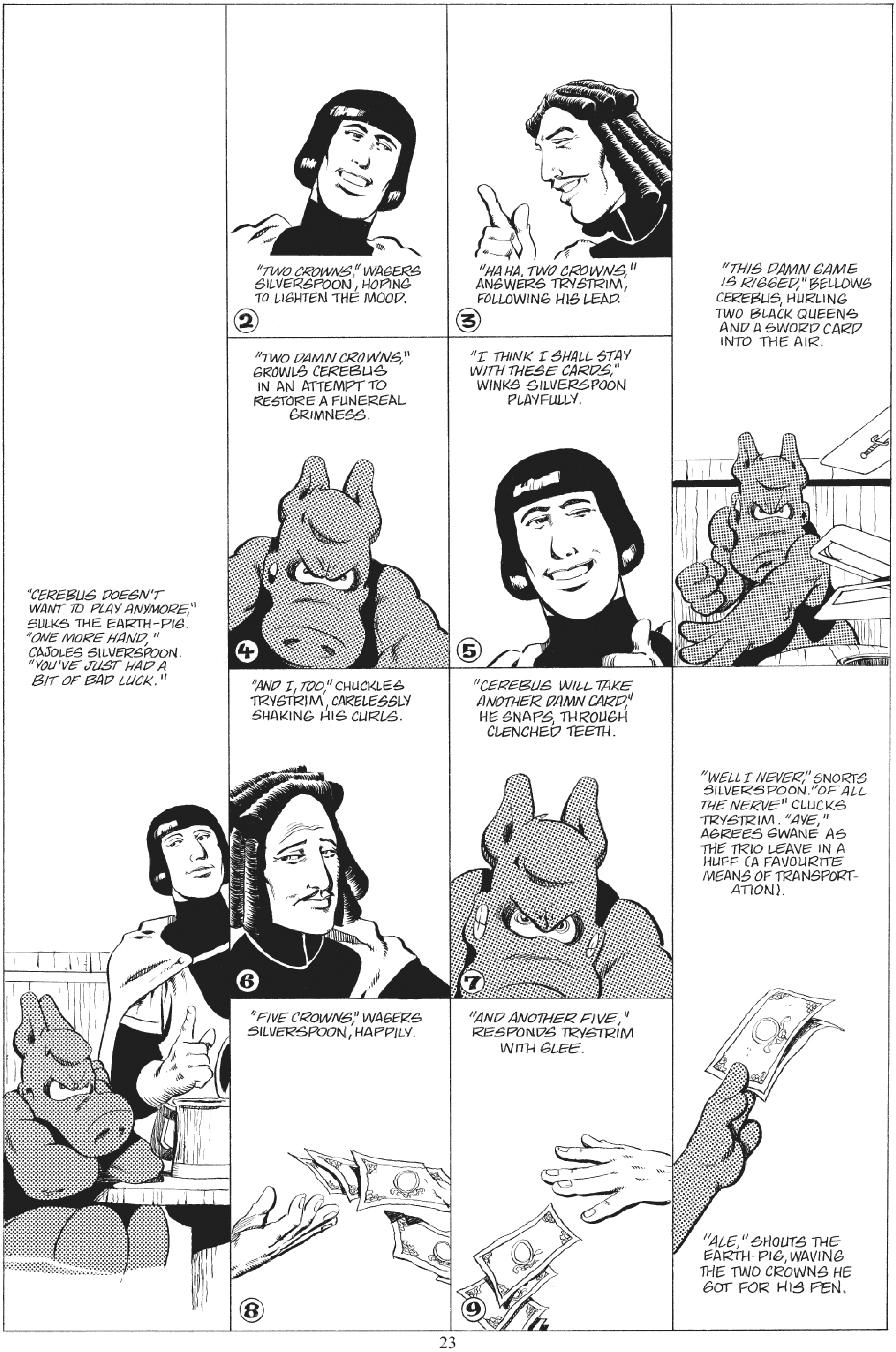

"AH! CEREBUS!" CRIES YOUNG LORD SILVERSPOON. "WE HAVE FOUND A FRIENDLY FACE AT LAST...."
"AFTER YOU, MY GOOD FRIEND," MURMURS LORD TRYSTRIM. "YOUR OBEDIENT SERVANT," SAYS LORD GWANE. "CLOVIS' PERFUME AND POWDER PUFF," MUTTERS THE EARTH-PIG BORN.
"I HAVE HAD MY EMPLOYMENT TERMINATED," HONKS THE YOUNG SNOB, ADDING LACONICALLY, "IF YOU CAN IMAGINE SUCH A THING."
"FIFTY CROWNS AND AN EVICTION NOTICE," HE WHINES. "IT IS AN OUTRAGE AGAINST MY MARKET VALUE AS AN OFFICIAL EMBARRASSMENT TO MY FATHER'S ADMINISTRATION."
"OFFICIAL EMBARRASSMENT?" QUERIES THE AARDVARK.
"DID I NOT TOAST THE PIRATES WHO HAVE BEEN DECIMATING MY FATHER'S SHIPPING FLEET?" POUTS THE YOUNG ARISTOCRAT. "DID I NOT WRITE LETTERS CONDEMNING PALNU'S EXPANSIONIST POLICIES?"
"INDEED, YOU DID," AGREES TRYSTRIM.
"YOU DID INDEED," CONCURS GWANE

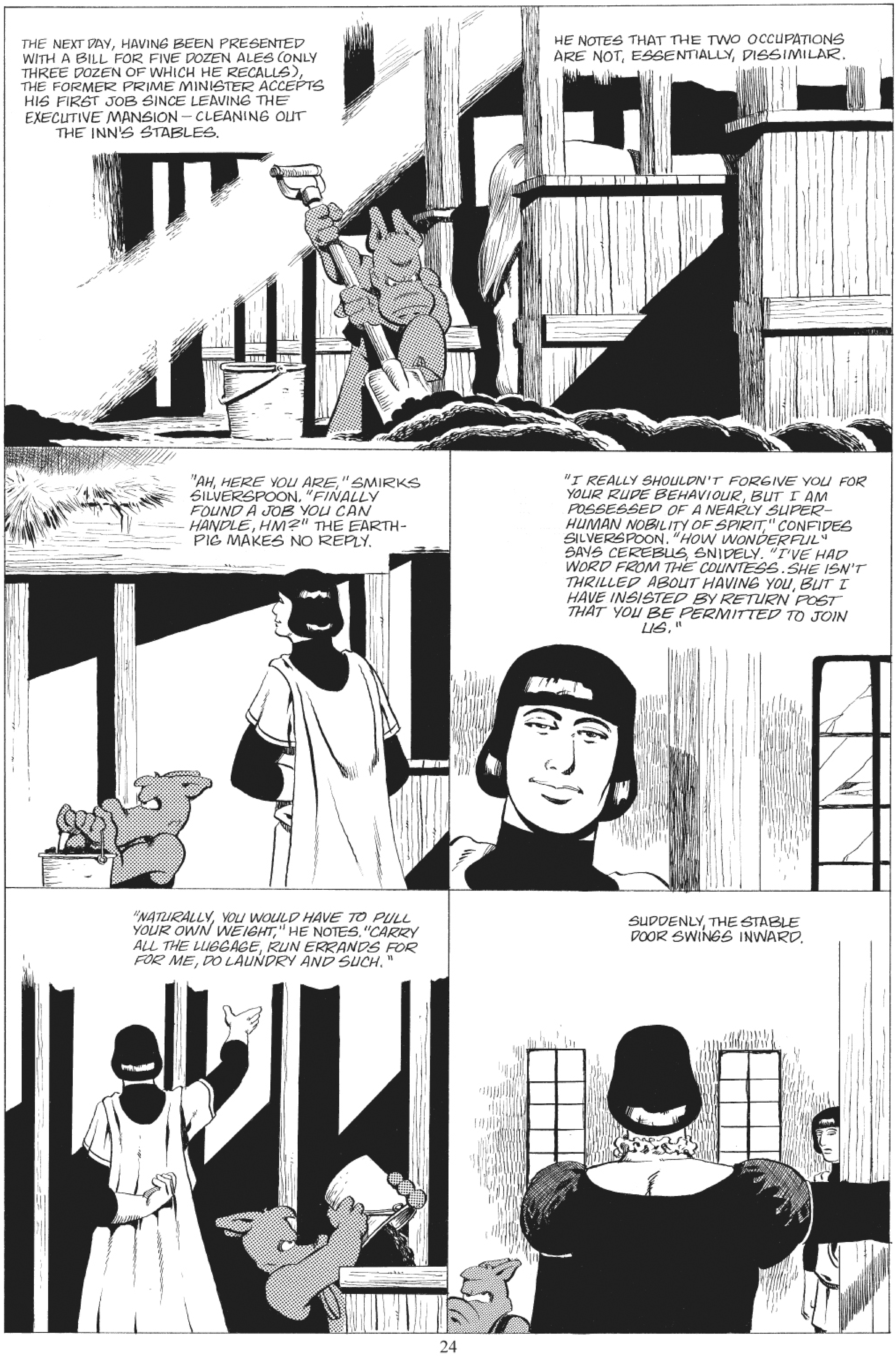

"I EVEN TOLD THE STORY OF HOW LORD JULIUS SHOT HIMSELF IN THE FOOT WHILE LEARNING HOW TO FIRE A CROSSBOW," HE SIGHS. "THEY JUST DIDN'T REALIZE MY VALUE."
"THAT'LL BE SIX BITS," INTERRUPTS THE WAITER.
THE EARTH-PIG BITES HIS TONGUE.
"I SEEM TO HAVE MISPLACED MY PURSE," INTERJECTS TRYSTRIM.
"WHAT DID I DO WITH THAT HALF-CROWN?" FUMES GWANE.
"HERE," ANSWERS SILVERSPOON, "TAKE THIS AND GET OUT OF MY SIGHT UNTIL WE NEED MORE ALE."
"WHY--THANK YOU, M'LORD," STAMMERS THE WAITER.
"THIS MUG IS FILTHY," SNORTS TRYSTRIM.
"THIS ALE IS WATERY," WHINES GWANE.
"I THINK IT IS TIME TO WRITE A LETTER," MUSES SILVERSPOON.
"PAPER AND INK," DEMANDS TRYSTRIM, SNAPPING HIS FINGERS.
"PAPER AND INK," ECHOES GWANE WITH MILITARY PRECISION.

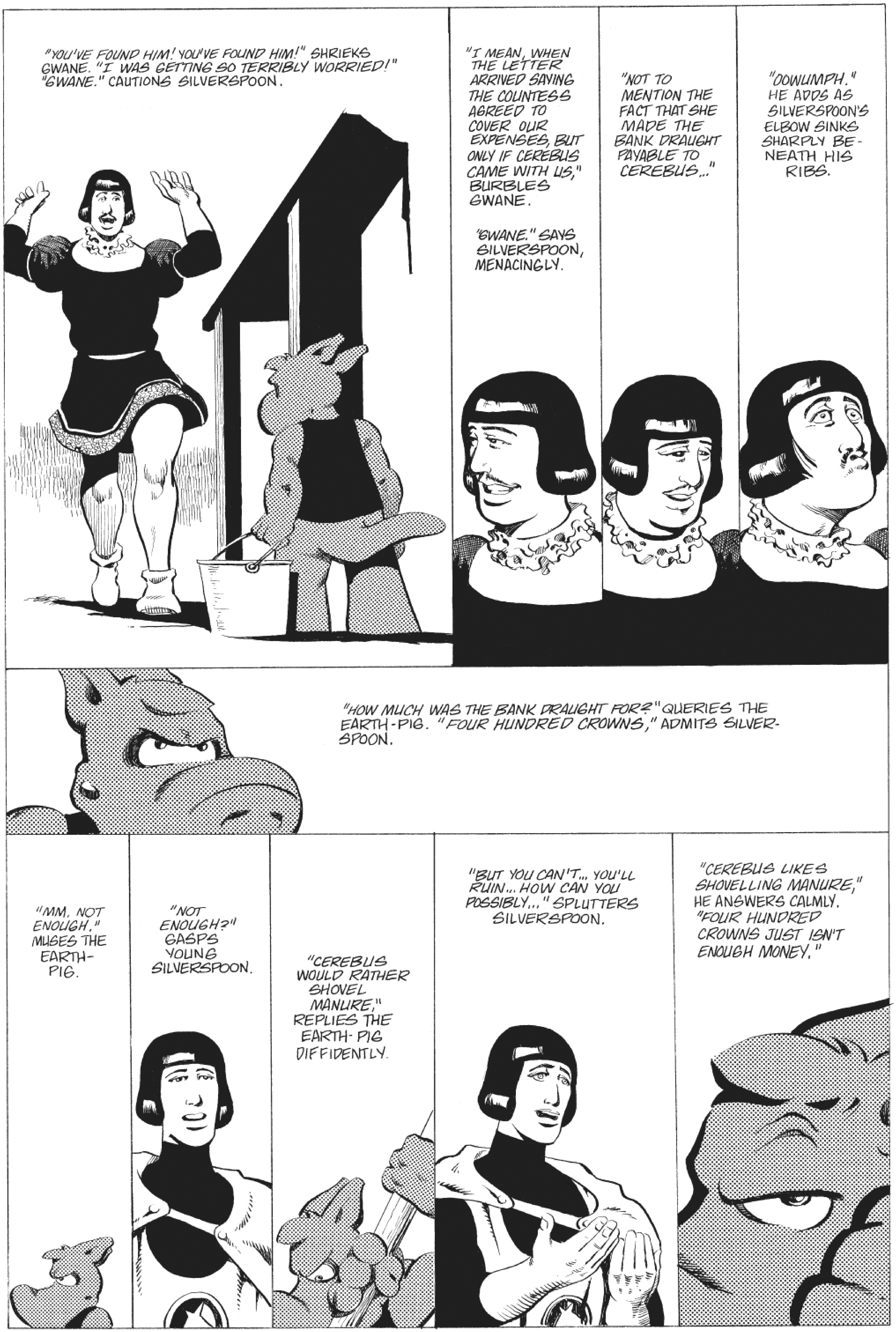

"AND A PEN AS WELL," ADDS TRYSTRIM.
"A--UH--PEN," REITERATES GWANE UNCERTAINLY AS HE SEARCHES HIS POCKETS.
"PEN--TWO CROWNS," SUGGESTS CEREBUS GREEDILY.
"SOLD," ANNOUNCES SILVERSPOON.
"MY DEAR COUNTESS DETIN COMMA," HE DICTATES, "HAVING HEARD ABOUT MY FATHER'S REFUSAL TO DEFER TAXATION ON YOUR HOLDINGS IN PALNU COMMA I AM MOVED TO OFFER MY SERVICES PERIOD I WOULD REQUIRE ONLY FOOD AND SHELTER FOR MYSELF AND TWO COMPANIONS PARENTHESIS WHO WILL AID ME IN SEEKING JUSTICE FOR YOU PARENTHESIS PERIOD"
"I SAY--HOW WOULD YOU LIKE A NICE REST IN THE COUNTRY WHILE YOU WORK ON YOUR MEMOIRS," ASKS SILVERSPOON.
"MY WHAT?" GROWLS CEREBUS.
"YOUR HISTORY--YOUR BOOK," HE EXPLAINS NASALLY.
"WHY DIDN'T YOU SAY 'BOOK' THE FIRST TIME," GRUMBLES THE AARDVARK.
"I AM PLEASED TO INFORM YOU COMMA AS WELL COMMA THAT THE FORMER KITCHEN STAFF SUPERVISOR SLASH PRIME MINISTER WILL BE JOINING US PERIOD PLEASE CONTACT ME AT THE ADDRESS BELOW PERIOD YOURS TRULY ET CETERA," HE CONCLUDES.

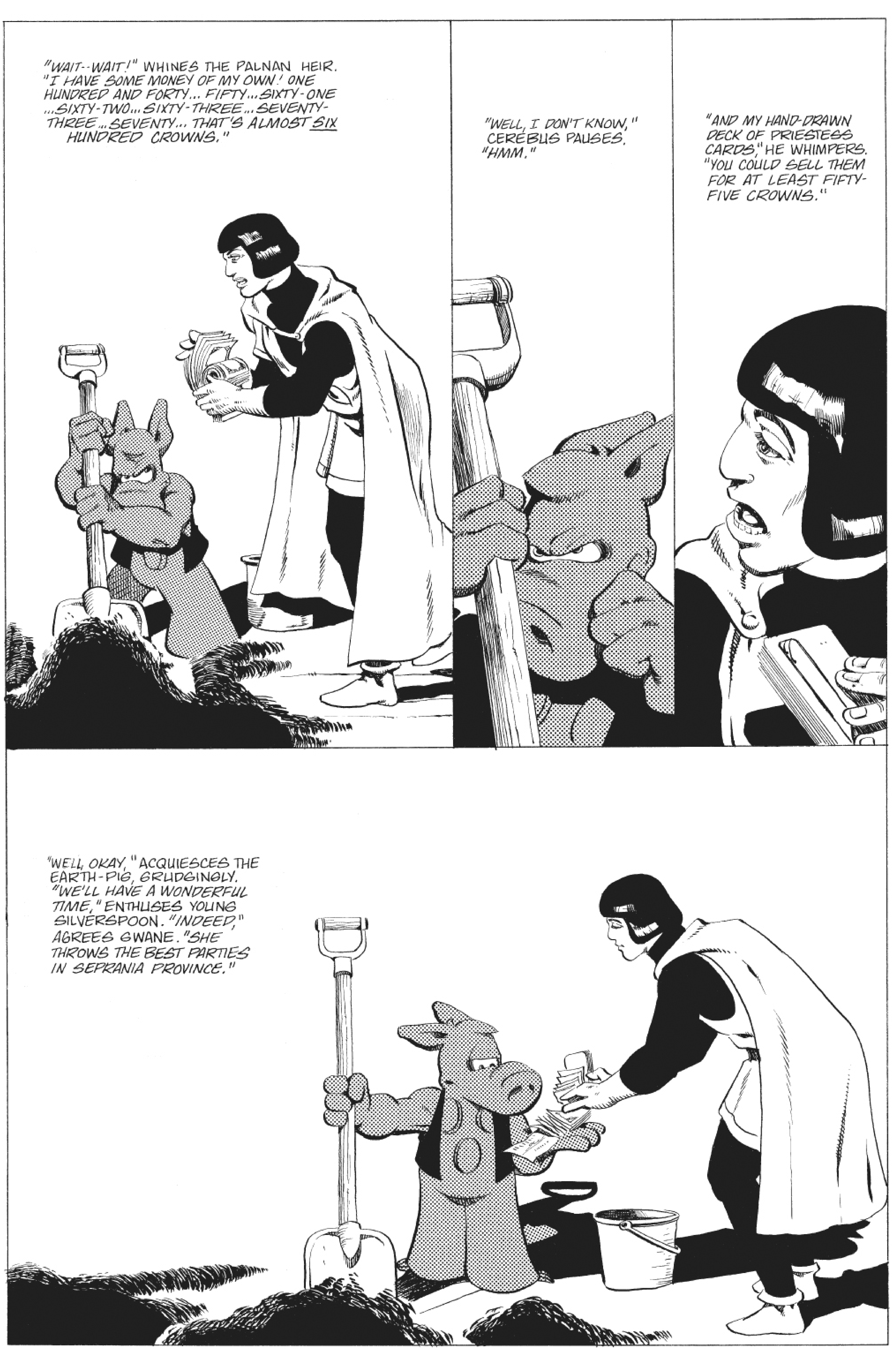

"WELL, ENOUGH OF LETTER-WRITING," CRIES YOUNG SILVERSPOON CHEERFULLY. "NOW, YOU AND TRYSTRIM AND I MUST HAVE A GAME OF CARDS. GWANE DOESN'T PLAY." "DIAMONDBACK?" ASKS THE EARTH-PIG, MENTALLY LICKING HIS LIPS.
"HEAVENS NO--A GAME OF PRIESTESS! NO ONE PLAYS DIAMONDBACK ANYMORE," HE ADMONISHES DEPRECATINGLY.
"CEREBUS HAS NEVER HEARD OF IT," THE AARDVARK GRUMBLES. "IT'S EVER SO SIMPLE," ENTHUSES SILVERSPOON.
"EVEN YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO UNDERSTAND IT," HE ADDS.
"WE EACH GET THREE CARDS. THE PRIESTESS IS WORTH FOUR, THE WHITE QUEEN IS WORTH PLUS TWO, THE BLACK QUEEN IS WORTH MINUS TWO. THE GOLD CARD DOUBLES THE VALUE OF THE PRIESTESS OR QUEEN CARDS OR, WITHOUT THEM, IS WORTH ONE POINT. THE SWORD CARD DOESN'T DO ANYTHING. THE SCEPTER CARD REDUCES THE PRIESTESS OR QUEEN CARDS TO HALF THEIR VALUE, OR, BY ITSELF, IS WORTH MINUS ONE. THE PRIEST CARD ADDS ONE TO THE FINAL TOTAL. WE EACH ANTE A CROWN, THEN THE DEALER MAKES AN INITIAL WAGER WHICH THE OTHER PLAYERS HAVE TO MATCH. THEN YOU DISCARD ONE AND TAKE ANOTHER FROM THE DECK, OR STAY WITH THE THREE YOU HAVE. THEN THE DEALER BETS AGAIN AND THE OTHER PLAYERS CAN MATCH THE BET OR RAISE IT AND WHEN THE BETTING IS OVER, WE DETERMINE WHO WON AND THE WINNER IS THE DEALER FOR THE NEXT HAND, UNLESS THERE'S A TIE IN WHICH CASE THE TIED PLAYERS PLAY ANOTHER HAND TO DETERMINE WHO WINS THE POT AND THE DEALER
"CEREBUS DOESN'T HAVE ANY MONEY," MUTTERS CEREBUS EVASIVELY.
"DON'T BE SUCH A KILL-JOY" LECTURES THE YOUNG ARISTOCRAT. "I HAVE PLENTY TO GO AROUND."
"I'LL DEAL FIRST," HE OFFERS, RAPIDLY SHUFFLING THE CARDS.

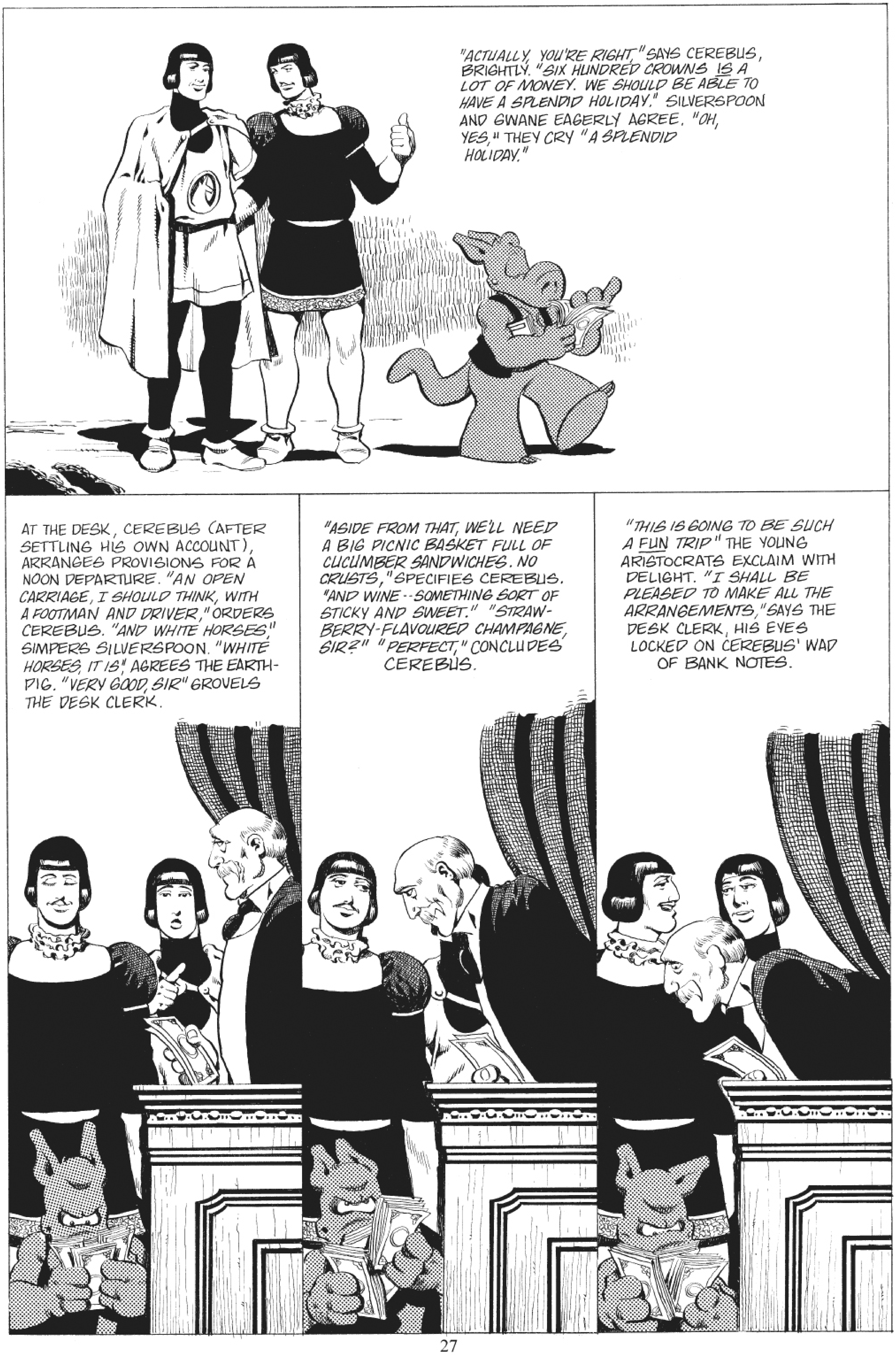

"CEREBUS CAN'T STAND 'CUTE' CARD GAMES," SNARLS THE EARTH-PIG.
"TWO CROWNS," WAGERS SILVERSPOON, IGNORING HIM.
"TWO CROWNS," CHIRPS TRYSTRIM, AGREEABLY.
"TWO CROWNS," ADDS CEREBUS, HAVING DECIDED THERE ARE WORSE THINGS IN LIFE THAN GAMBLING WITH SOMEONE ELSE'S MONEY.
"I'LL TAKE ONE," SAYS SILVERSPOON.
"ONE," SAYS TRYSTRIM.
"ONE," SAYS CEREBUS
"THREE CROWNS," ASSERTS SILVERSPOON, HIS SCALP TINGLING WITH EXCITEMENT.
"THREE CROWNS," SNAPS TRYSTRIM, WITH GREAT GUSTO.
"THREE CROWNS," MUTTERS CEREBUS UNCERTAINLY...
"PRIESTESS, WHITE QUEEN, SWORD. THAT'S SIX," CHORTLES SILVERSPOON.
"SWORD, SWORD, PRIEST," SIGHS TRYSTRIM. "THAT'S ONE."
"BLACK QUEEN, GOLD, GOLD... MINUS... UH... EIGHT," MURMURS CEREBUS.
HIS COMPANIONS STIFLE IMPOLITE GIGGLES.

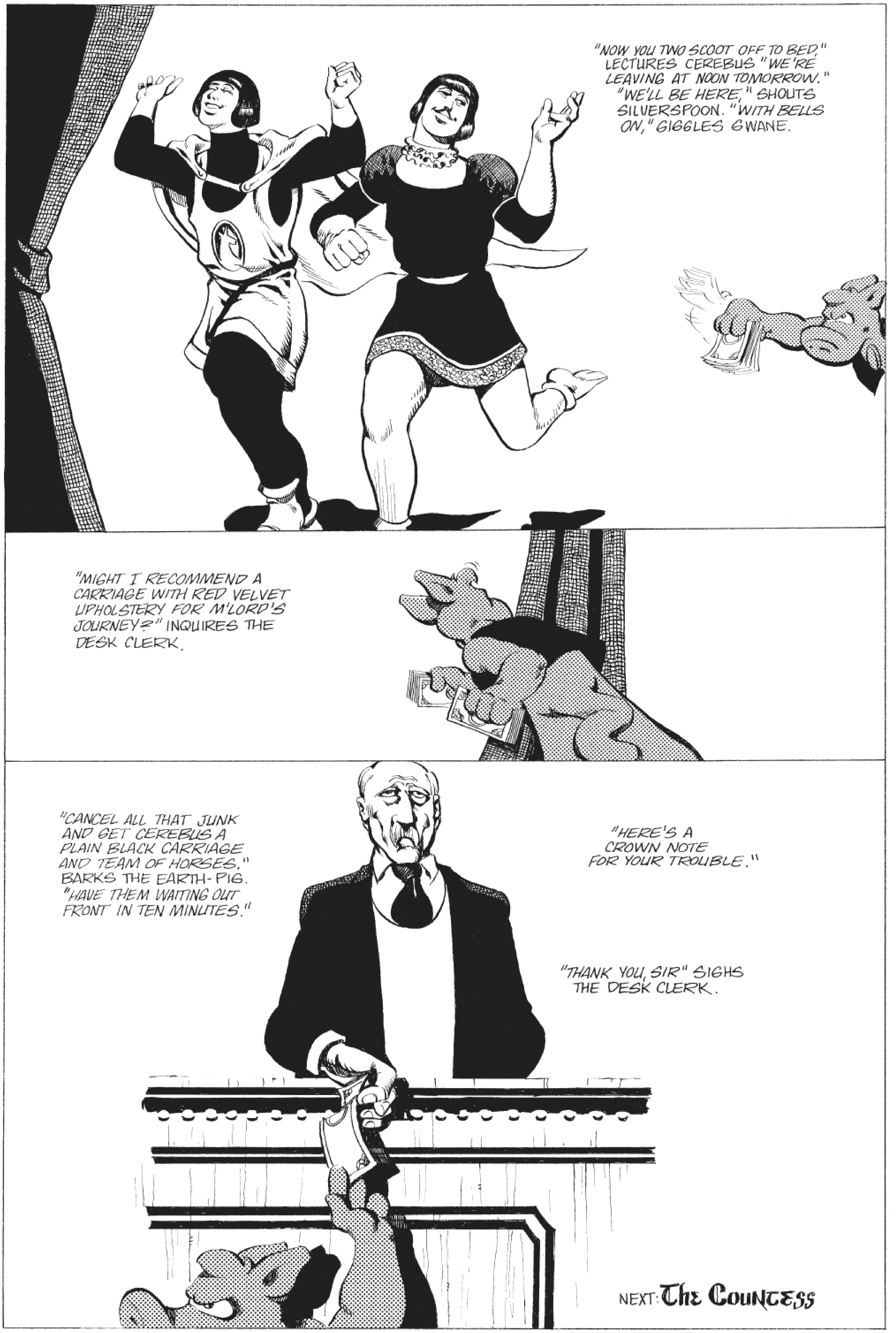

"CEREBUS DOESN'T WANT TO PLAY ANYMORE," SULKS THE EARTH-PIG. "ONE MORE HAND," CAJOLES SILVERSPOON. "YOU'VE JUST HAD A BIT OF BAD LUCK."
"TWO CROWNS," WAGERS SILVERSPOON, HOPING TO LIGHTEN THE MOOD.
②
"HA HA. TWO CROWNS," ANSWERS TRYSTRIM, FOLLOWING HIS LEAD.
③
"TWO DAMN CROWNS," GROWLS CEREBUS IN AN ATTEMPT TO RESTORE A FUNEREAL GRIMNESS.
④
"I THINK I SHALL STAY WITH THESE CARDS," WINKS SILVERSPOON PLAYFULLY.
⑤
"AND I, TOO," CHUCKLES TRYSTRIM, CARELESSLY SHAKING HIS CURLS.
⑥
"CEREBUS WILL TAKE ANOTHER DAMN CARD," HE SNAPS, THROUGH CLENCHED TEETH.
⑦
"FIVE CROWNS," WAGERS SILVERSPOON, HAPPILY.
⑧
"AND ANOTHER FIVE," RESPONDS TRYSTRIM WITH GLEE.
⑨
"THIS DAMN GAME IS RIGGED," BELLOWS CEREBUS, HURLING TWO BLACK QUEENS AND A SWORD CARD INTO THE AIR.
"WELL I NEVER," SNORTS SILVERSPOON. "OF ALL THE NERVE" CLUCKS TRYSTRIM. "AYE," AGREES GWANE AS THE TRIO LEAVE IN A HUFF (A FAVOURITE MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION).
"ALE," SHOUTS THE EARTH-PIG, WAVING THE TWO CROWNS HE GOT FOR HIS PEN.


THE NEXT DAY, HAVING BEEN PRESENTED WITH A BILL FOR FIVE DOZEN ALES (ONLY THREE DOZEN OF WHICH HE RECALLS), THE FORMER PRIME MINISTER ACCEPTS HIS FIRST JOB SINCE LEAVING THE EXECUTIVE MANSION — CLEANING OUT THE INN'S STABLES.
HE NOTES THAT THE TWO OCCUPATIONS ARE NOT, ESSENTIALLY, DISSIMILAR.
"AH, HERE YOU ARE," SMIRKS SILVERSPOON. "FINALLY FOUND A JOB YOU CAN HANDLE, HM?" THE EARTH-PIG MAKES NO REPLY.
"I REALLY SHOULDN'T FORGIVE YOU FOR YOUR RUDE BEHAVIOUR, BUT I AM POSSESSED OF A NEARLY SUPER-HUMAN NOBILITY OF SPIRIT," CONFIDES SILVERSPOON. "HOW WONDERFUL" SAYS CEREBUS, SNIDELY. "I'VE HAD WORD FROM THE COUNTESS. SHE ISN'T THRILLED ABOUT HAVING YOU, BUT I HAVE INSISTED BY RETURN POST THAT YOU BE PERMITTED TO JOIN US."
"NATURALLY, YOU WOULD HAVE TO PULL YOUR OWN WEIGHT," HE NOTES. "CARRY ALL THE LUGGAGE, RUN ERRANDS FOR FOR ME, DO LAUNDRY AND SUCH."
SUDDENLY, THE STABLE DOOR SWINGS INWARD.

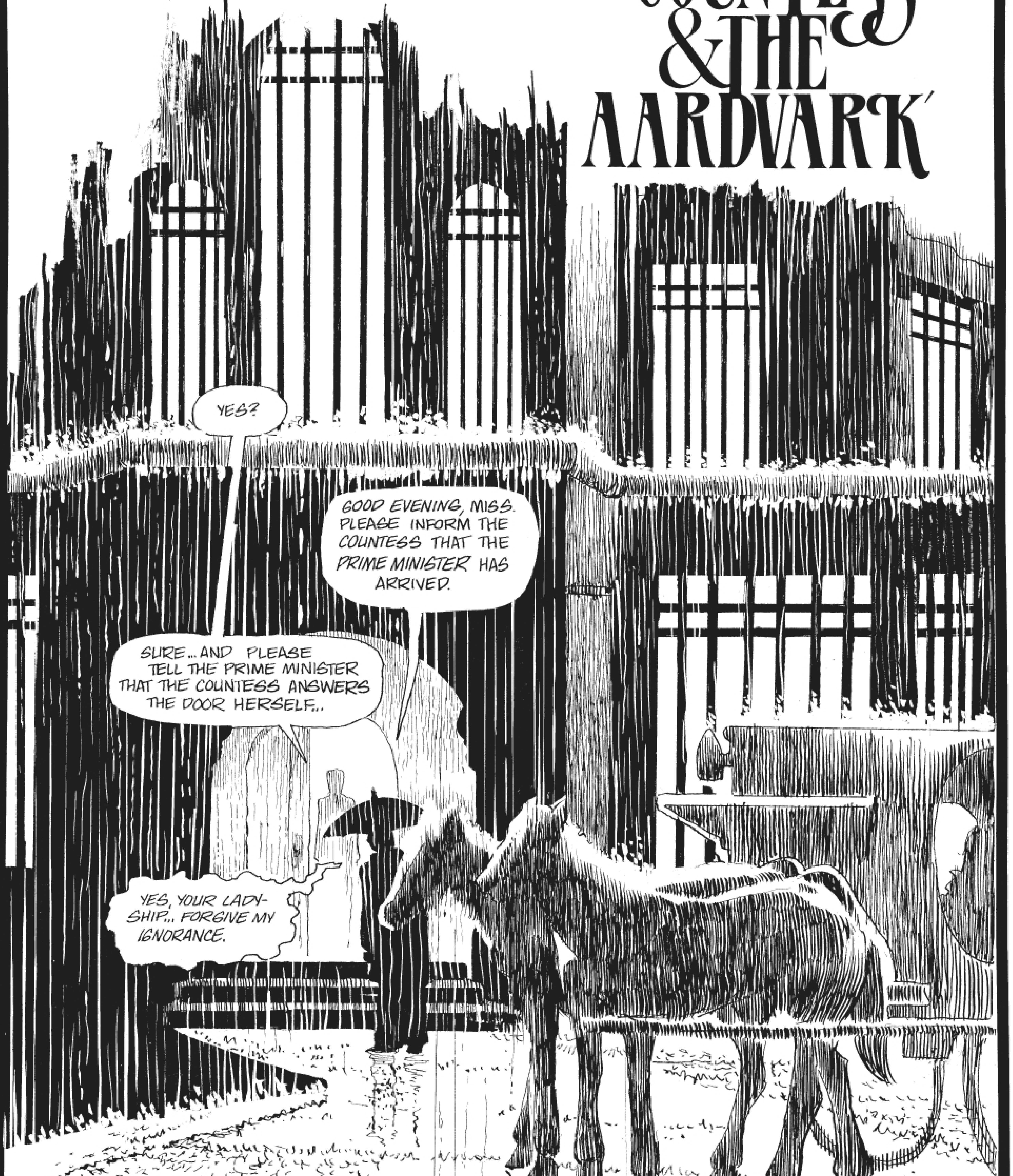

"YOU'VE FOUND HIM! YOU'VE FOUND HIM!" SHRIEKS GWANE. "I WAS GETTING SO TERRIBLY WORRIED!" "GWANE." CAUTIONS SILVERSPOON.
"I MEAN, WHEN THE LETTER ARRIVED SAYING THE COUNTESS AGREED TO COVER OUR EXPENSES, BUT ONLY IF CEREBUS CAME WITH US," BURBLES GWANE.
"GWANE." SAYS SILVERSPOON, MENACINGLY.
"NOT TO MENTION THE FACT THAT SHE MADE THE BANK DRAUGHT PAYABLE TO CEREBUS..."
"OOWUMPH." HE ADDS AS SILVERSPOON'S ELBOW SINKS SHARPLY BENEATH HIS RIBS.
"HOW MUCH WAS THE BANK DRAUGHT FOR?" QUERIES THE EARTH-PIG. "FOUR HUNDRED CROWNS," ADMITS SILVERSPOON.
"MM, NOT ENOUGH." MUSES THE EARTH-PIG.
"NOT ENOUGH?" GASPS YOUNG SILVERSPOON.
"CEREBUS WOULD RATHER SHOVEL MANURE," REPLIES THE EARTH-PIG DIFFIDENTLY.
"BUT YOU CAN'T... YOU'LL RUIN... HOW CAN YOU POSSIBLY..." SPLUTTERS SILVERSPOON.
"CEREBUS LIKES SHOVELLING MANURE," HE ANSWERS CALMLY. "FOUR HUNDRED CROWNS JUST ISN'T ENOUGH MONEY."

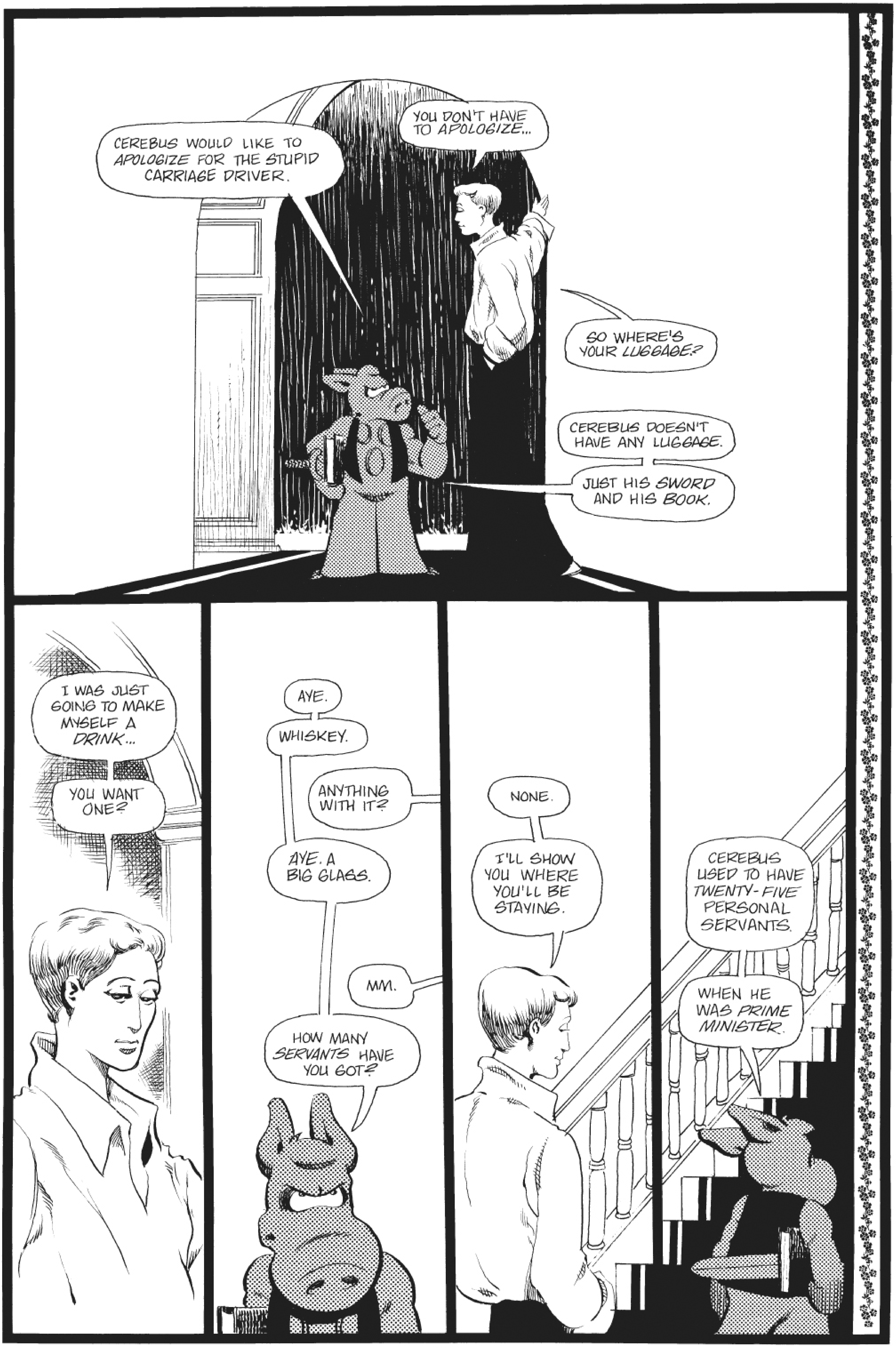

"WAIT--WAIT!" WHINES THE PALNAN HEIR. "I HAVE SOME MONEY OF MY OWN! ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY... FIFTY... SIXTY-ONE ...SIXTY-TWO... SIXTY-THREE... SEVENTY-THREE... SEVENTY... THAT'S ALMOST SIX HUNDRED CROWNS."
"WELL, I DON'T KNOW," CEREBUS PAUSES. "HMM."
"AND MY HAND-DRAWN DECK OF PRIESTESS CARDS," HE WHIMPERS. "YOU COULD SELL THEM FOR AT LEAST FIFTY-FIVE CROWNS."
"WELL, OKAY," ACQUIESCES THE EARTH-PIG, GRUDGINGLY. "WE'LL HAVE A WONDERFUL TIME," ENTHUSES YOUNG SILVERSPOON. "INDEED," AGREES GWANE. "SHE THROWS THE BEST PARTIES IN SEPRANIA PROVINCE."

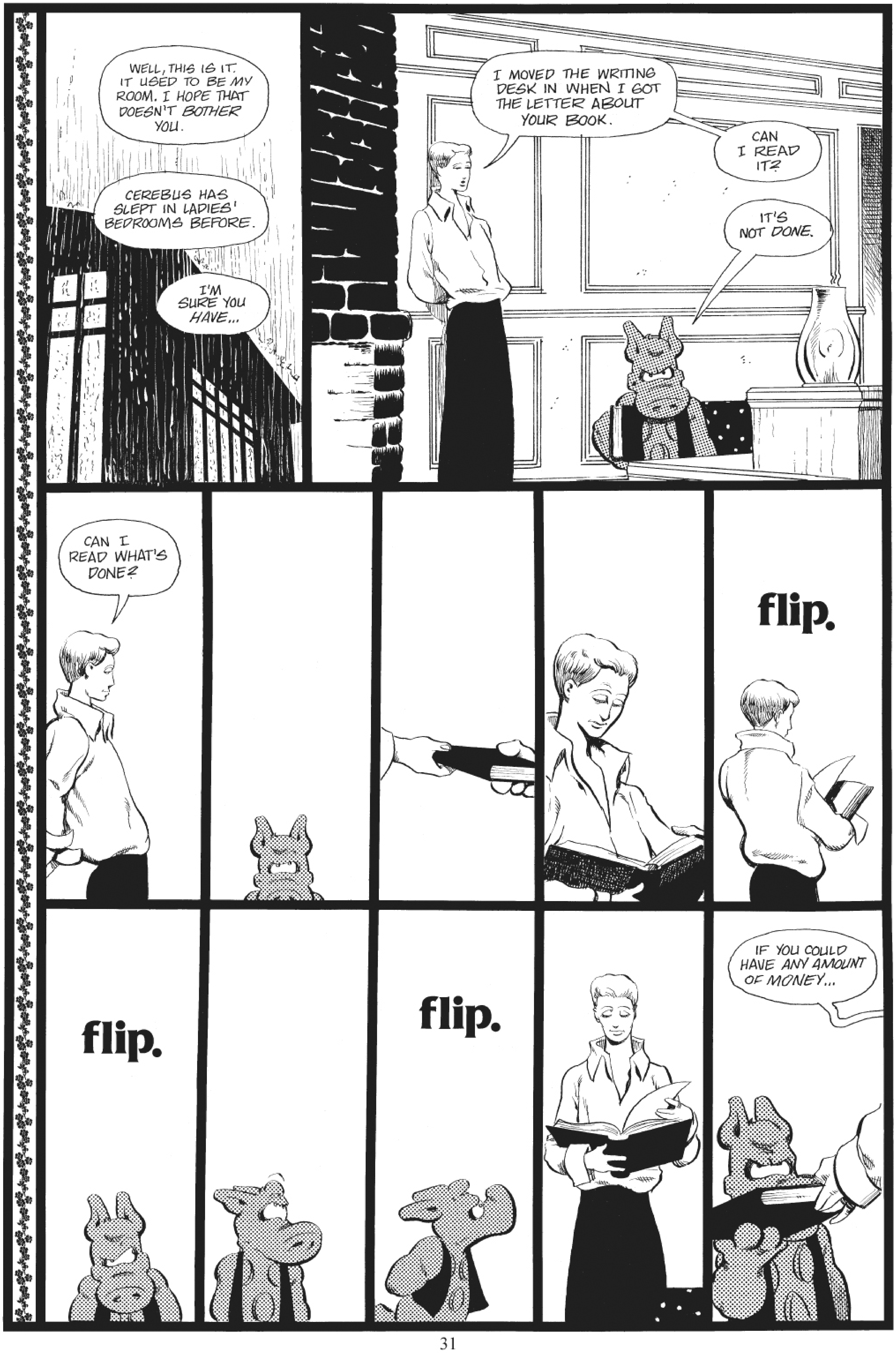

"ACTUALLY, YOU'RE RIGHT," SAYS CEREBUS, BRIGHTLY. "SIX HUNDRED CROWNS IS A LOT OF MONEY. WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO HAVE A SPLENDID HOLIDAY." SILVERSPOON AND GWANE EAGERLY AGREE. "OH, YES," THEY CRY "A SPLENDID HOLIDAY."
AT THE DESK, CEREBUS (AFTER SETTLING HIS OWN ACCOUNT), ARRANGES PROVISIONS FOR A NOON DEPARTURE. "AN OPEN CARRIAGE, I SHOULD THINK, WITH A FOOTMAN AND DRIVER," ORDERS CEREBUS. "AND WHITE HORSES," SIMPERS SILVERSPOON. "WHITE HORSES, IT IS," AGREES THE EARTH-PIG. "VERY GOOD, SIR" GROVELS THE DESK CLERK.
"ASIDE FROM THAT, WE'LL NEED A BIG PICNIC BASKET FULL OF CUCUMBER SANDWICHES. NO CRUSTS," SPECIFIES CEREBUS. "AND WINE -- SOMETHING SORT OF STICKY AND SWEET." "STRAWBERRY-FLAVOURED CHAMPAGNE, SIR?" "PERFECT," CONCLUDES CEREBUS.
"THIS IS GOING TO BE SUCH A FUN TRIP" THE YOUNG ARISTOCRATS EXCLAIM WITH DELIGHT. "I SHALL BE PLEASED TO MAKE ALL THE ARRANGEMENTS," SAYS THE DESK CLERK, HIS EYES LOCKED ON CEREBUS' WAD OF BANK NOTES.

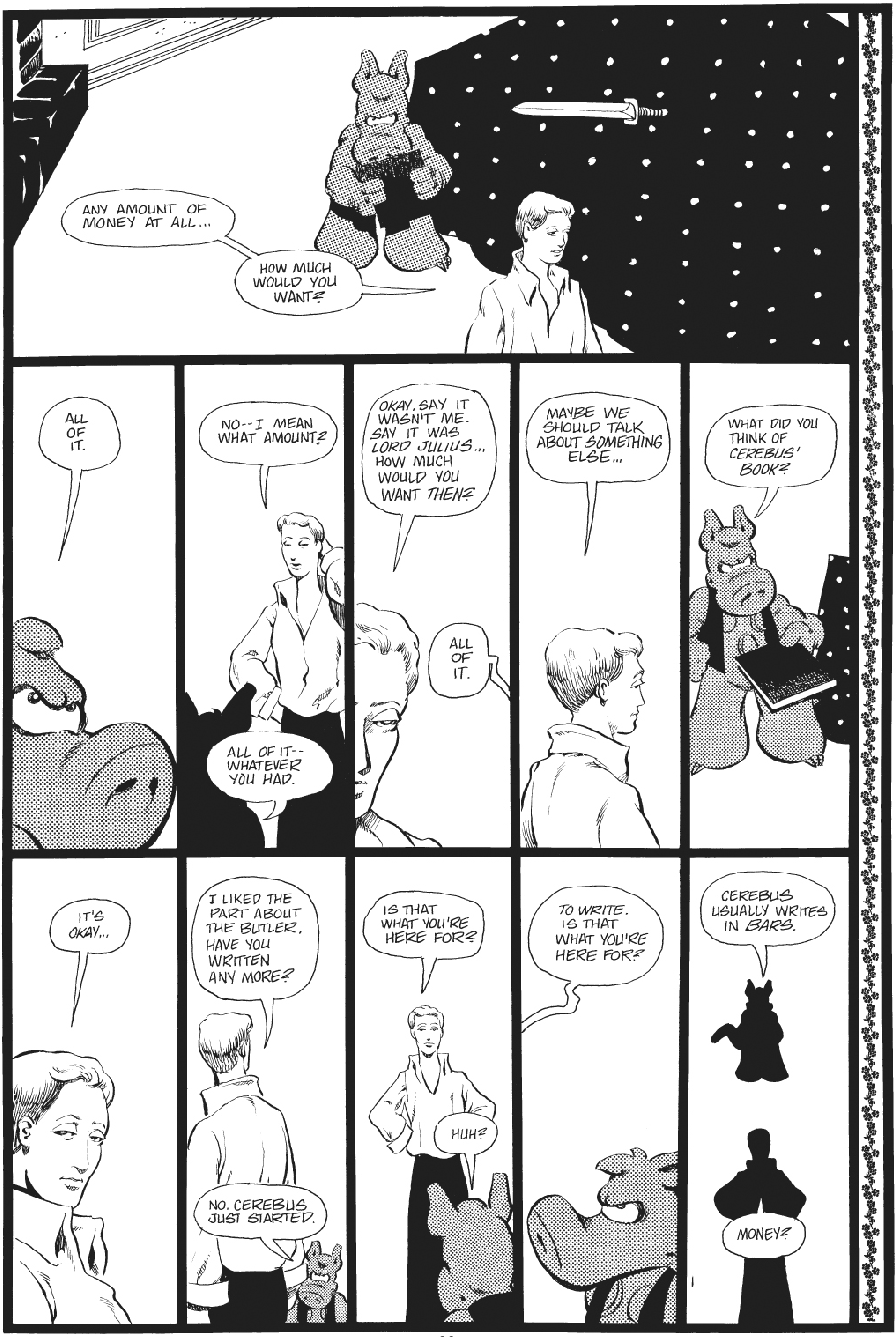

"NOW YOU TWO SCOOT OFF TO BED," LECTURES CEREBUS "WE'RE LEAVING AT NOON TOMORROW."
"WE'LL BE HERE," SHOUTS SILVERSPOON. "WITH BELLS ON," GIGGLES GWANE.
"MIGHT I RECOMMEND A CARRIAGE WITH RED VELVET UPHOLSTERY FOR M'LORD'S JOURNEY?" INQUIRES THE DESK CLERK.
"CANCEL ALL THAT JUNK AND GET CEREBUS A PLAIN BLACK CARRIAGE AND TEAM OF HORSES." BARKS THE EARTH-PIG. "HAVE THEM WAITING OUT FRONT IN TEN MINUTES."
"HERE'S A CROWN NOTE FOR YOUR TROUBLE."
"THANK YOU, SIR" SIGHS THE DESK CLERK.
NEXT: The Countess

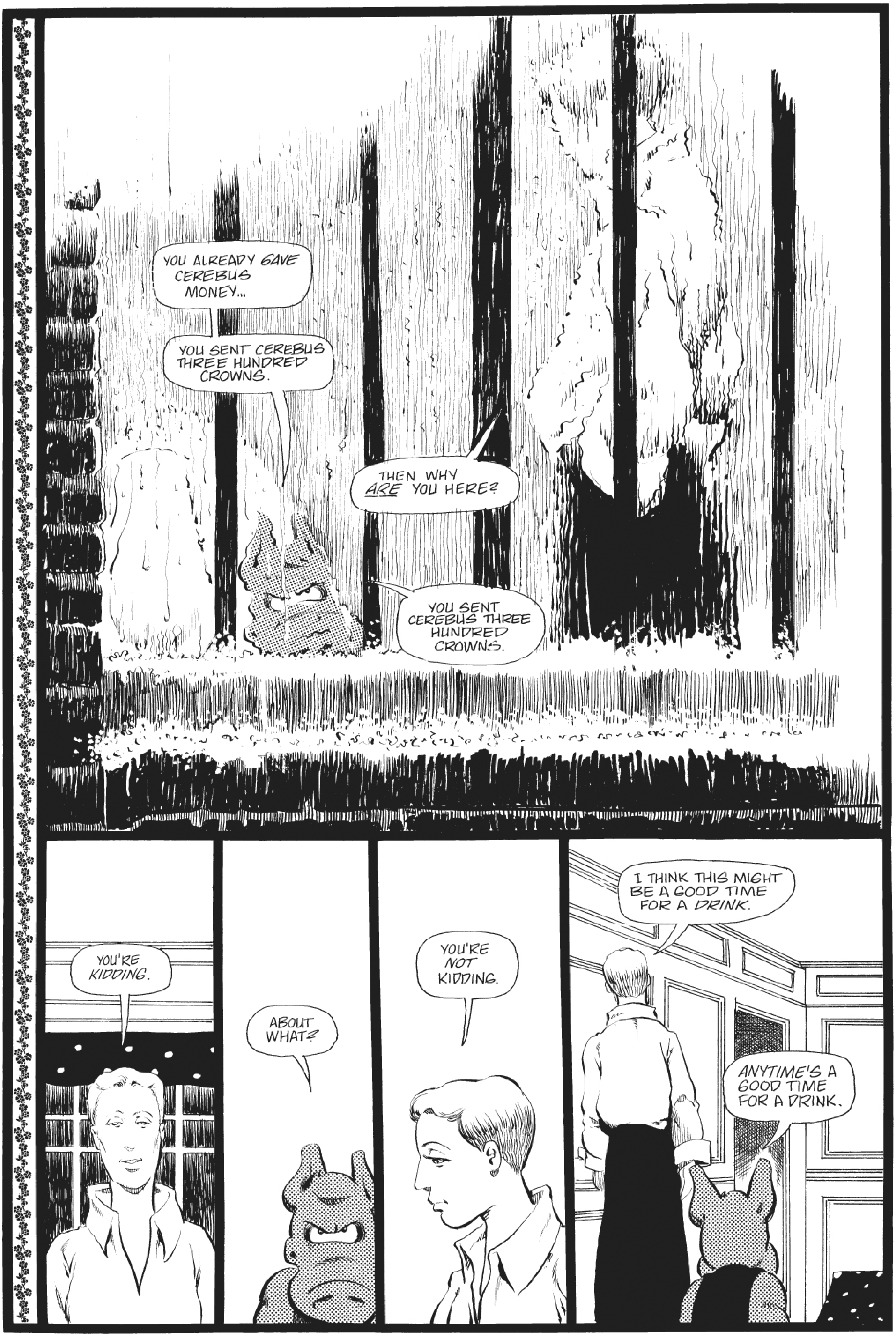
CEREBUS in 'THE COUNTESS & THE AARDVARK'

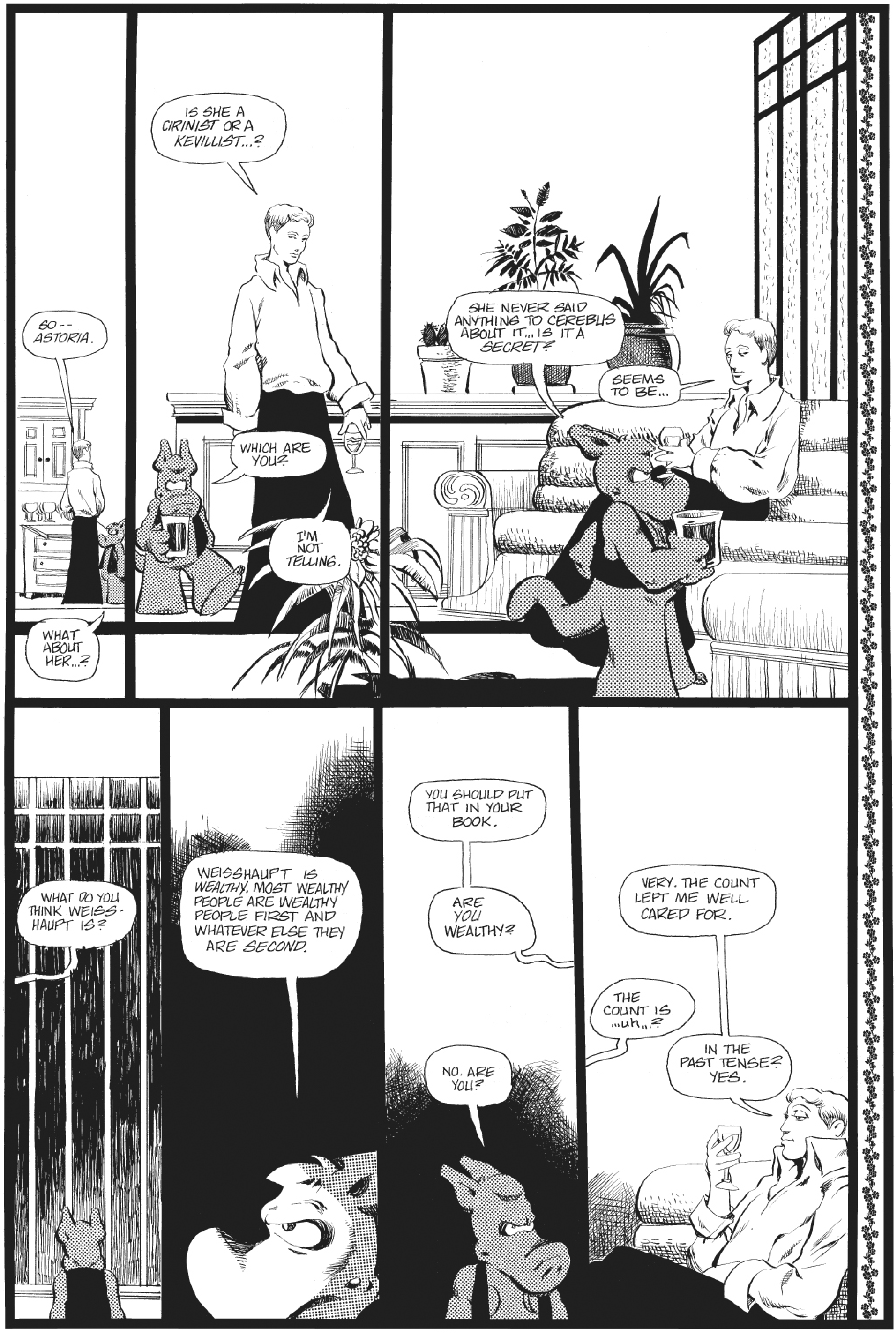

YES?
GOOD EVENING, MISS. PLEASE INFORM THE COUNTESS THAT THE *PRIME MINISTER* HAS ARRIVED.
SURE... AND PLEASE TELL THE PRIME MINISTER THAT THE COUNTESS ANSWERS THE DOOR HERSELF...
YES, YOUR LADYSHIP... FORGIVE MY IGNORANCE.

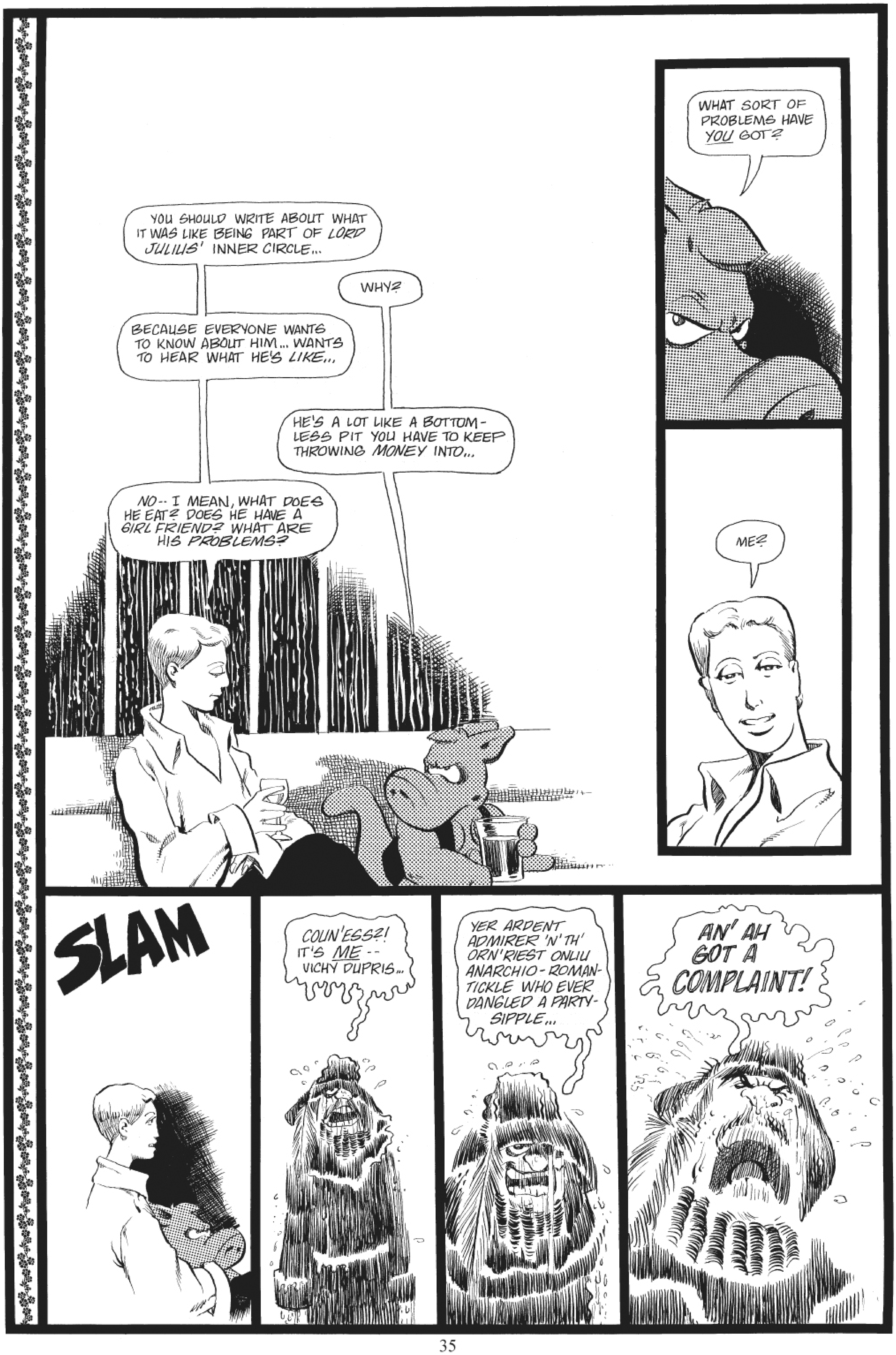

CEREBUS WOULD LIKE TO *APOLOGIZE* FOR THE STUPID CARRIAGE DRIVER.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO *APOLOGIZE*...
SO WHERE'S YOUR *LUGGAGE?*
CEREBUS DOESN'T HAVE ANY LUGGAGE.
JUST HIS *SWORD* AND HIS *BOOK*.
I WAS JUST GOING TO MAKE MYSELF A *DRINK*...
YOU WANT ONE?
AYE.
WHISKEY.
ANYTHING WITH IT?
AYE. A BIG GLASS.
MM.
HOW MANY *SERVANTS* HAVE YOU GOT?
NONE.
I'LL SHOW YOU WHERE YOU'LL BE STAYING.
CEREBUS USED TO HAVE *TWENTY-FIVE* PERSONAL SERVANTS.
WHEN HE WAS *PRIME MINISTER*.

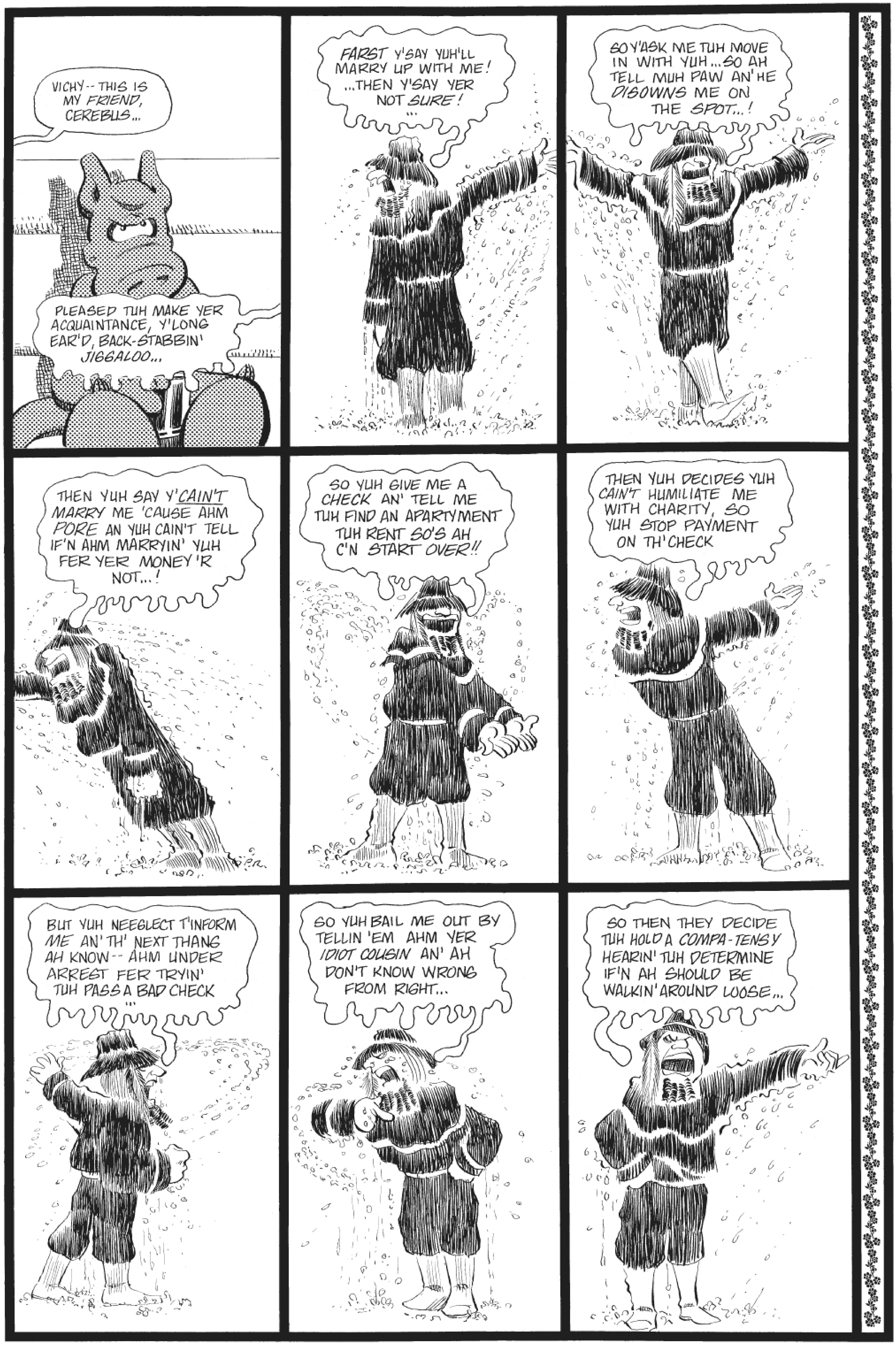

WELL, THIS IS IT. IT USED TO BE MY ROOM. I HOPE THAT DOESN'T *BOTHER* YOU.
CEREBUS HAS SLEPT IN LADIES' BEDROOMS BEFORE.
I'M SURE YOU *HAVE*...
I MOVED THE WRITING DESK IN WHEN I GOT THE LETTER ABOUT YOUR BOOK.
CAN I READ IT?
IT'S NOT *DONE*.
CAN I READ WHAT'S DONE?
flip.
flip.
flip.
IF YOU COULD HAVE *ANY* AMOUNT OF *MONEY*...

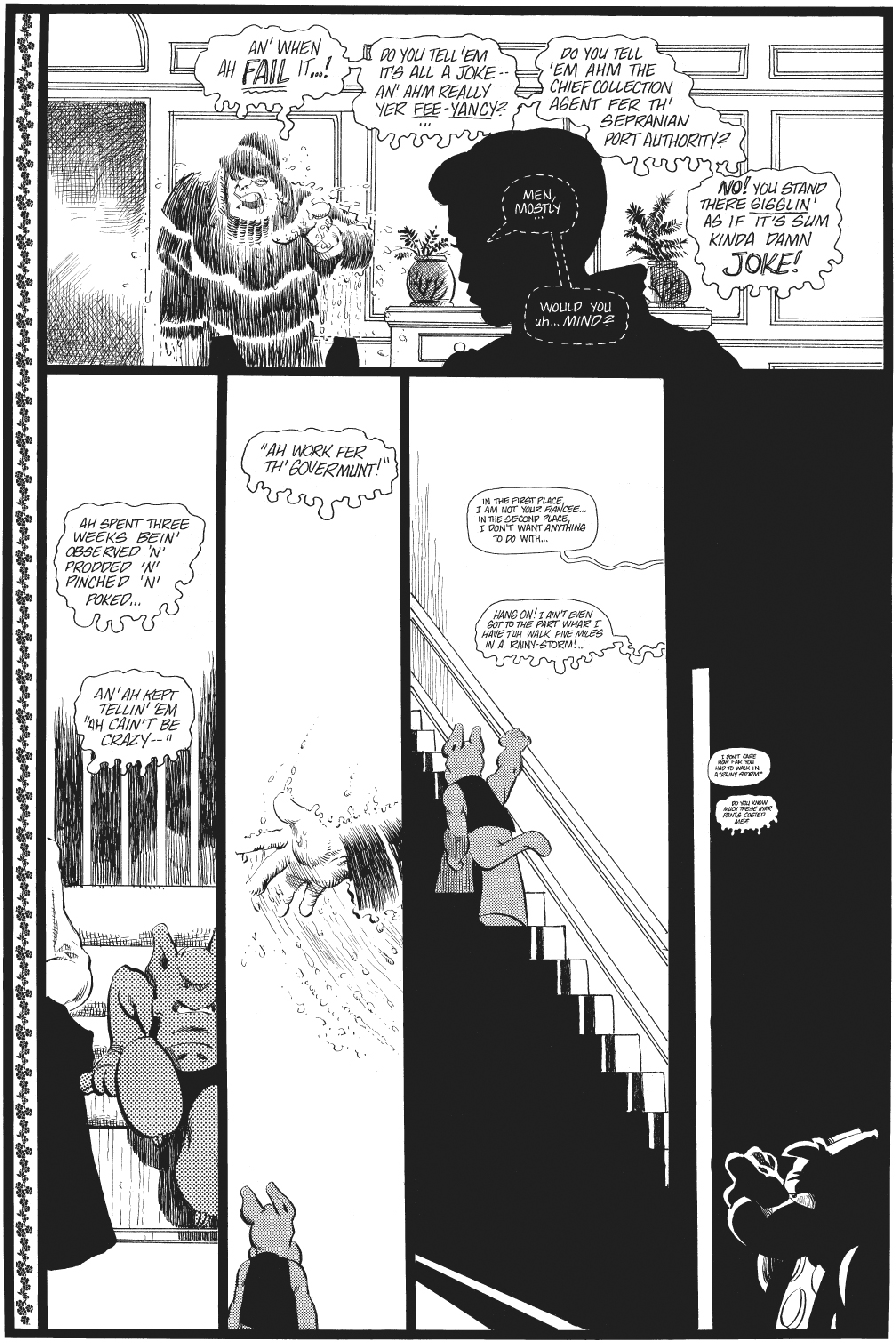

ANY AMOUNT OF MONEY AT ALL...
HOW MUCH WOULD YOU WANT?
ALL OF IT.
NO--I MEAN WHAT AMOUNT?
ALL OF IT--WHATEVER YOU HAD.
OKAY. SAY IT WASN'T ME. SAY IT WAS *LORD JULIUS*... HOW MUCH WOULD YOU WANT *THEN?*
ALL OF IT.
MAYBE WE SHOULD TALK ABOUT *SOMETHING* ELSE...
WHAT DID YOU THINK OF *CEREBUS'* *BOOK?*
IT'S *OKAY*...
I LIKED THE PART ABOUT THE BUTLER. HAVE YOU WRITTEN ANY MORE?
NO. CEREBUS JUST STARTED.
IS THAT WHAT YOU'RE HERE FOR?
HUH?
TO WRITE. IS THAT WHAT YOU'RE HERE FOR?
CEREBUS USUALLY WRITES IN *BARS.*
MONEY?

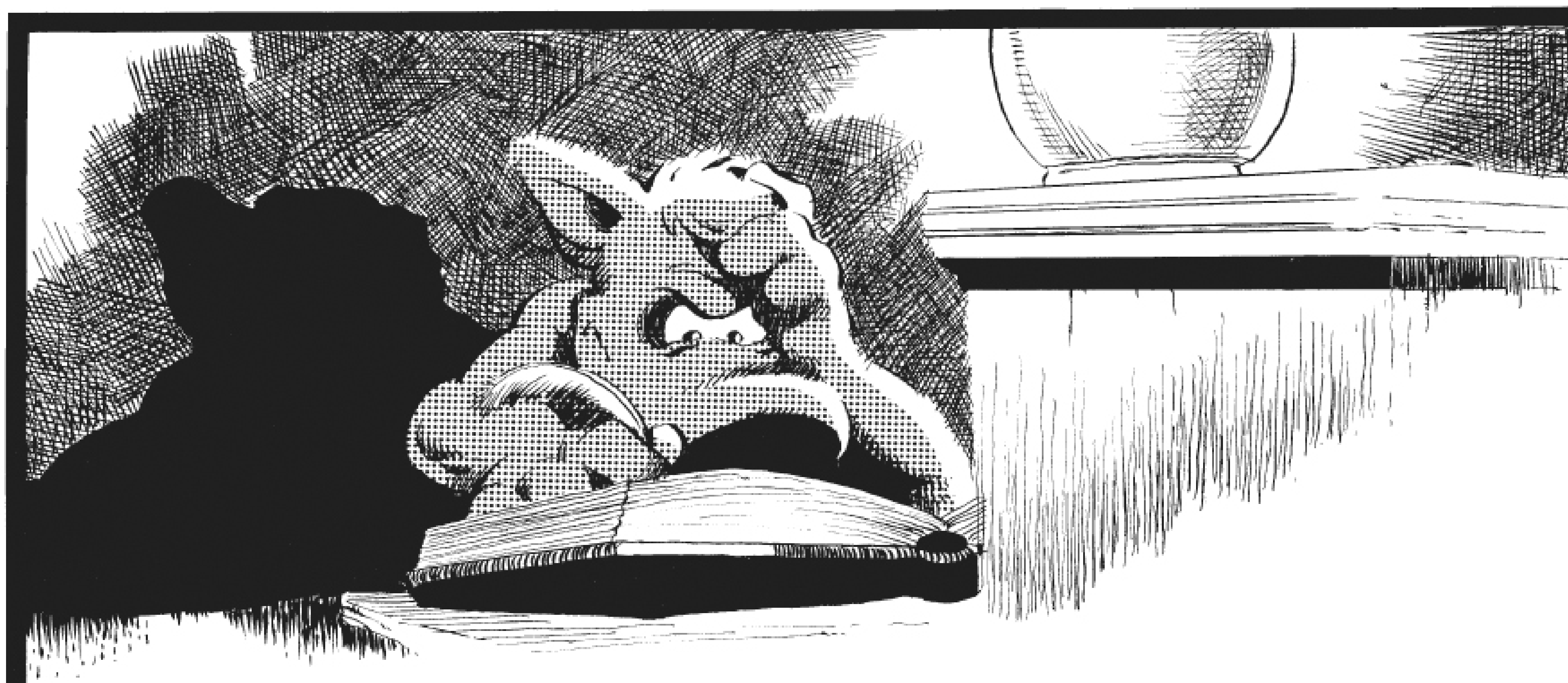

YOU ALREADY *GAVE* CEREBUS MONEY...
YOU SENT CEREBUS THREE HUNDRED CROWNS.
THEN WHY *ARE* YOU HERE?
YOU SENT CEREBUS THREE HUNDRED CROWNS.
YOU'RE *KIDDING*.
ABOUT WHAT?
YOU'RE *NOT* KIDDING.
I THINK THIS MIGHT BE A GOOD TIME FOR A *DRINK*.
ANYTIME'S A GOOD TIME FOR A DRINK.


SO -- ASTORIA.
WHAT ABOUT HER...?
IS SHE A CIRINIST OR A KEVILLIST...?
WHICH ARE YOU?
I'M NOT TELLING.
SHE NEVER SAID ANYTHING TO CEREBUS ABOUT IT... IS IT A SECRET?
SEEMS TO BE...
WHAT DO YOU THINK WEISSHAUPT IS?
WEISSHAUPT IS WEALTHY. MOST WEALTHY PEOPLE ARE WEALTHY PEOPLE FIRST AND WHATEVER ELSE THEY ARE SECOND.
YOU SHOULD PUT THAT IN YOUR BOOK.
ARE YOU WEALTHY?
NO. ARE YOU?
VERY. THE COUNT LEFT ME WELL CARED FOR.
THE COUNT IS ...uh...?
IN THE PAST TENSE? YES.


WHAT SORT OF PROBLEMS HAVE *YOU* GOT?
YOU SHOULD WRITE ABOUT WHAT IT WAS LIKE BEING PART OF *LORD JULIUS'* INNER CIRCLE...
WHY?
BECAUSE EVERYONE WANTS TO KNOW ABOUT HIM... WANTS TO HEAR WHAT HE'S *LIKE*...
HE'S A LOT LIKE A BOTTOMLESS PIT YOU HAVE TO KEEP THROWING *MONEY* INTO...
NO-- I MEAN, WHAT DOES HE EAT? DOES HE HAVE A *GIRLFRIEND?* WHAT ARE HIS *PROBLEMS?*
ME?
SLAM
COUN'ESS?! IT'S *ME* -- VICHY DUPRIS...
YER ARDENT ADMIRER 'N' TH' ORN'RIEST ONLIU ANARCHIO-ROMANTICKLE WHO EVER DANGLED A PARTY-SIPPLE...
AN' AH GOT A COMPLAINT!


VICHY-- THIS IS MY *FRIEND*, CEREBUS...
PLEASED TUH MAKE YER ACQUAINTANCE, Y'LONG EAR'D, BACK-STABBIN' JIGGALOO...
FARST Y'SAY YUH'LL MARRY UP WITH ME! ...THEN Y'SAY YER NOT *SURE*! ...
SO Y'ASK ME TUH MOVE IN WITH YUH... SO AH TELL MUH PAW AN' HE *DISOWNS* ME ON THE *SPOT*...!
THEN YUH SAY Y'*CAIN'T MARRY* ME 'CAUSE AHM *PORE* AN YUH CAIN'T TELL IF'N AHM MARRYIN' YUH FER YER MONEY 'R NOT...!
SO YUH GIVE ME A *CHECK* AN' TELL ME TUH FIND AN APARTYMENT TUH RENT *SO'S* AH C'N *START OVER*!!
THEN YUH DECIDES YUH *CAIN'T* HUMILIATE ME WITH CHARITY, SO YUH STOP PAYMENT ON TH' CHECK
BUT YUH NEEGLECT T'INFORM *ME* AN' TH' NEXT THANG AH KNOW-- AHM UNDER ARREST FER TRYIN' TUH PASS A BAD CHECK ...
SO YUH BAIL ME OUT BY TELLIN 'EM AHM YER *IDIOT COUSIN* AN' AH DON'T KNOW WRONG FROM RIGHT...
SO THEN THEY DECIDE TUH HOLD A *COMPA-TENSY* HEARIN' TUH DETERMINE IF'N AH SHOULD BE WALKIN' AROUND LOOSE...


AN' WHEN AH FAIL IT...!
DO YOU TELL 'EM IT'S ALL A JOKE -- AN' AHM REALLY YER FEE-YANCY? ...
DO YOU TELL 'EM AHM THE CHIEF COLLECTION AGENT FER TH' SEPRANIAN PORT AUTHORITY?
MEN, MOSTLY ...
WOULD YOU uh... MIND?
NO! YOU STAND THERE GIGGLIN' AS IF IT'S SUM KINDA DAMN JOKE!
AH SPENT THREE WEEKS BEIN' OBSERVED 'N' PRODDED 'N' PINCHED 'N' POKED...
AN' AH KEPT TELLIN' 'EM "AH CAIN'T BE CRAZY--"
"AH WORK FER TH' GOVERMUNT!"
IN THE FIRST PLACE, I AM NOT YOUR FIANCEE... IN THE SECOND PLACE, I DON'T WANT ANYTHING TO DO WITH...
HANG ON! I AIN'T EVEN GOT TO THE PART WHAR I HAVE TUH WALK FIVE MILES IN A RAINY-STORM!...
I DON'T CARE HOW FAR YOU HAD TO WALK IN A "RAINY STORM."
DO YOU KNOW MUCH THESE HYAR PANTS COSTED ME?



"On Governing"
by
Former Prime Minister
Cerebus of
Iest

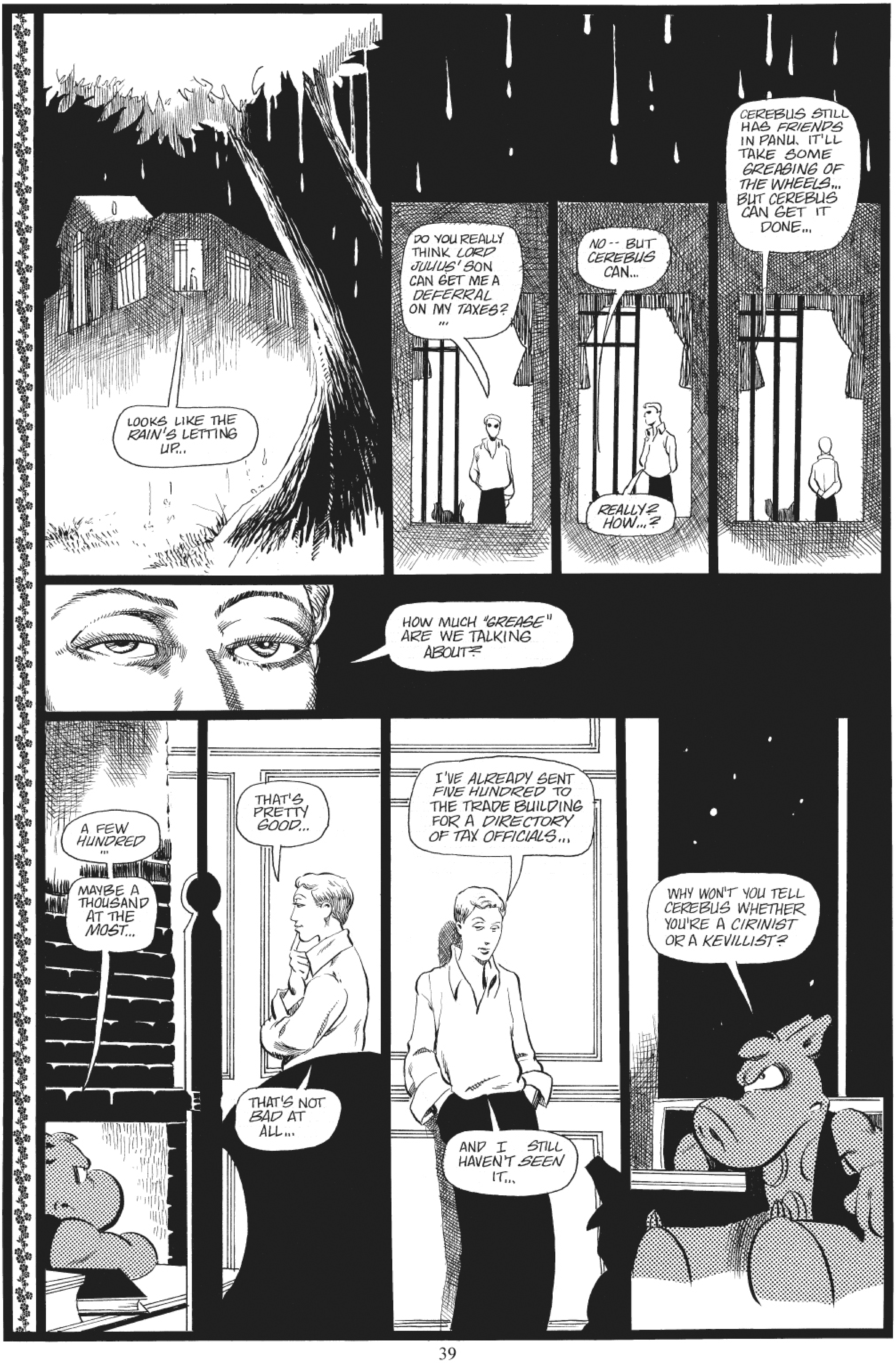
PART the Third

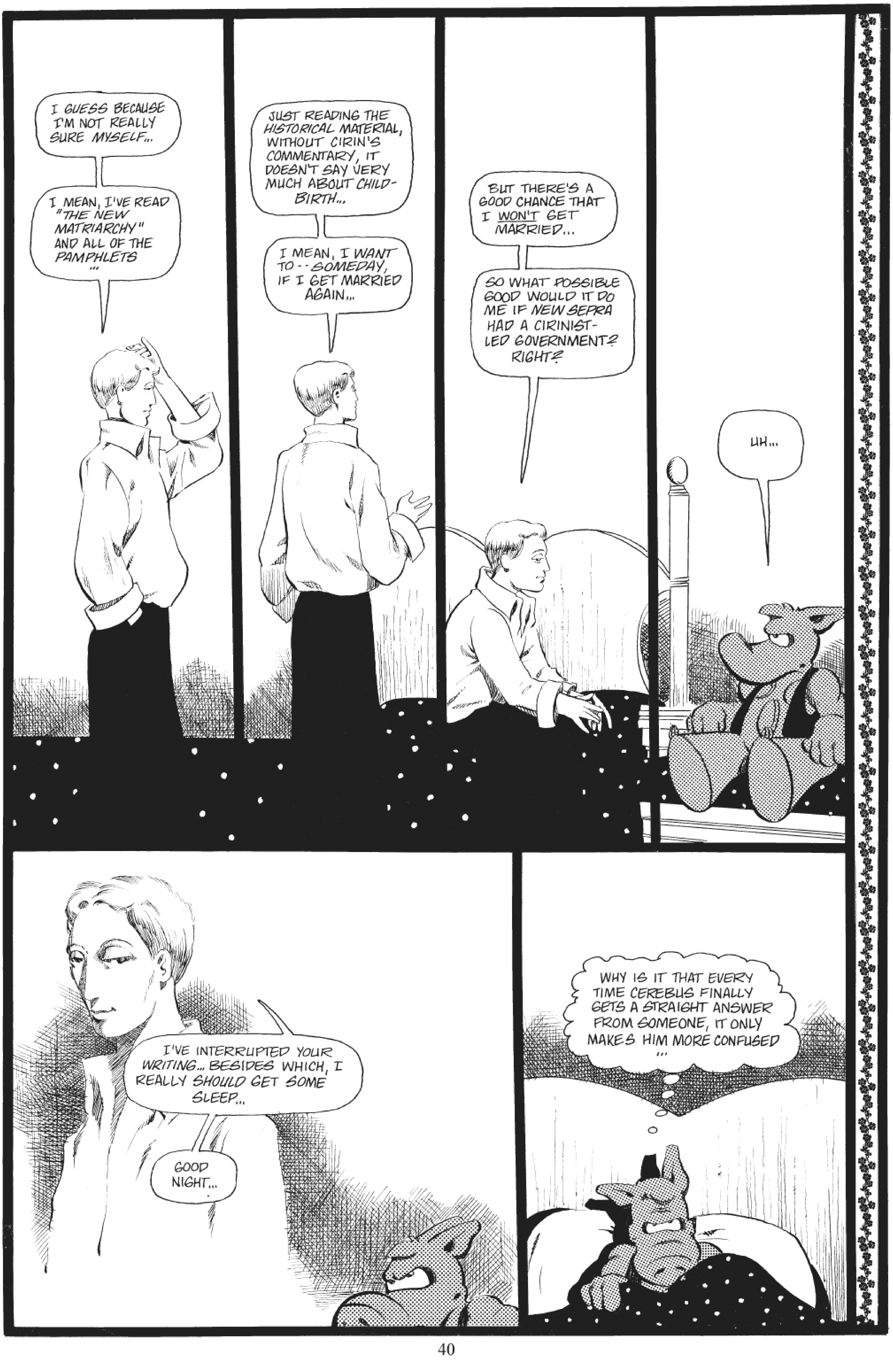
1. Lord Julius

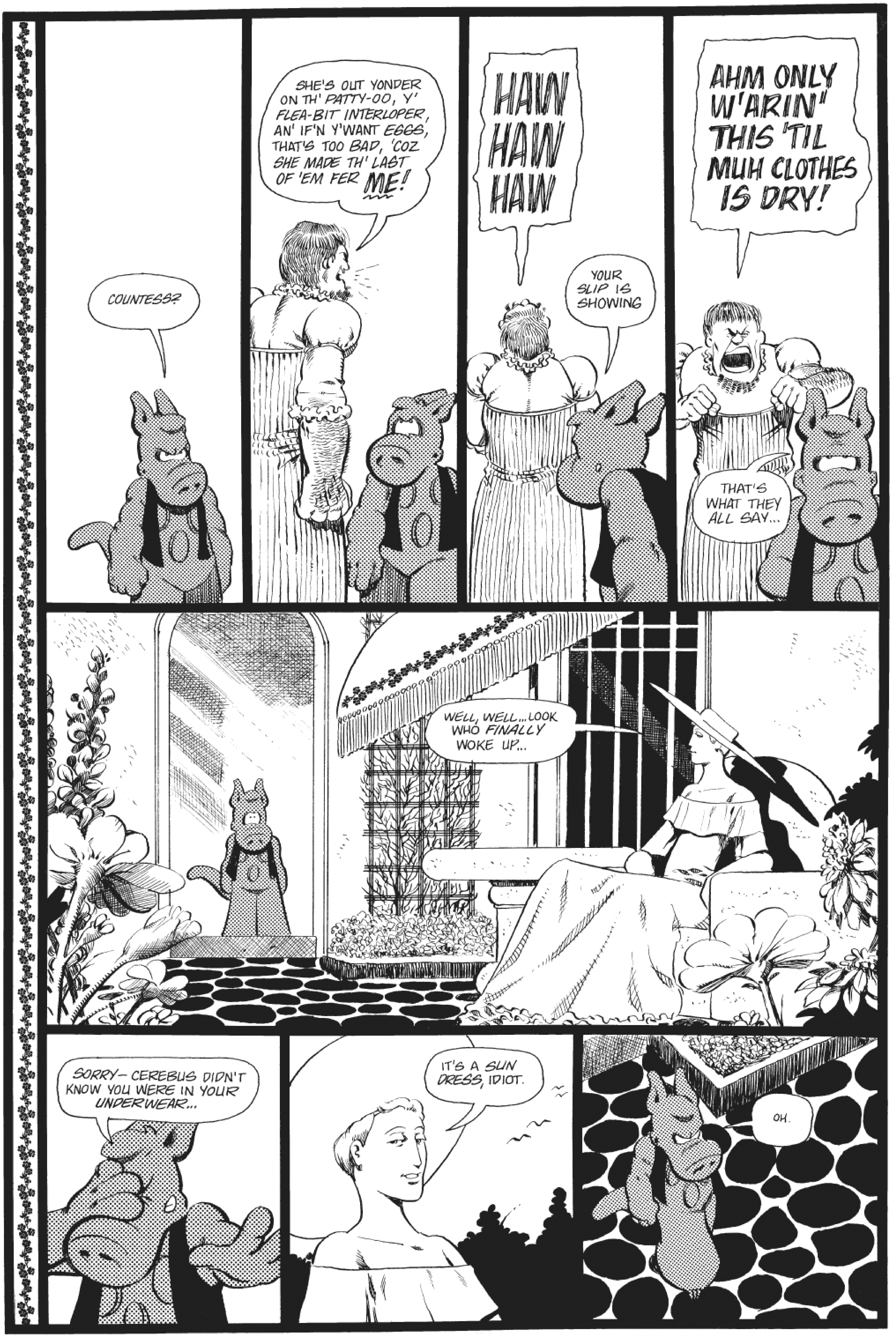
The first day that Cerebus was in Palnu, Lord Julius was meeting with the head of Parmoc's taxation department. The guy wanted to know what rate of tax was going to be charged property-owners that year. Lord Julius asked Cerebus to pick a number between one and twenty. I said seventeen. So he turns and tells the guy that it will be seventeen per cent. That pretty well sums up the kind of leader that Lord Julius is. Another time someone came and told him that the clean-up crews in the Trade Building were over-staffed and half of them were lying around with nothing to do. So, Lord Julius orders twenty gallons of paint from the supply room and has it sent to the lobby. If you have ever seen the lobby of the trade building, it is HUGE!! He calls in the Trade Building guards and tells them to cover the lobby with this paint, see? (Which is a sort of greenish-yellow colour). Here are these Trade Building guards spraying paint all over the marble columns and the inlaid floor. They must have thrown paint around for an hour and a half--no kidding. Finally Lord Julius tells them to stop and leaves instructions that the paint is to be allowed to dry overnight and then the clean-up crew is to be given _one day_ to clean it up or half of them would be fired. When they got it all done in time, he decided that they were over-staffed and fired half of them anyway. When people ask Cerebus what Lord Julius is like, this is what Cerebus thinks of. He's not very tall, but everyone does whatever he says right away. Except Cerebus. Cerebus used to ask "why" all the time, until Lord Julius would get tired of explaining and then he would go and ask someone else to do it.

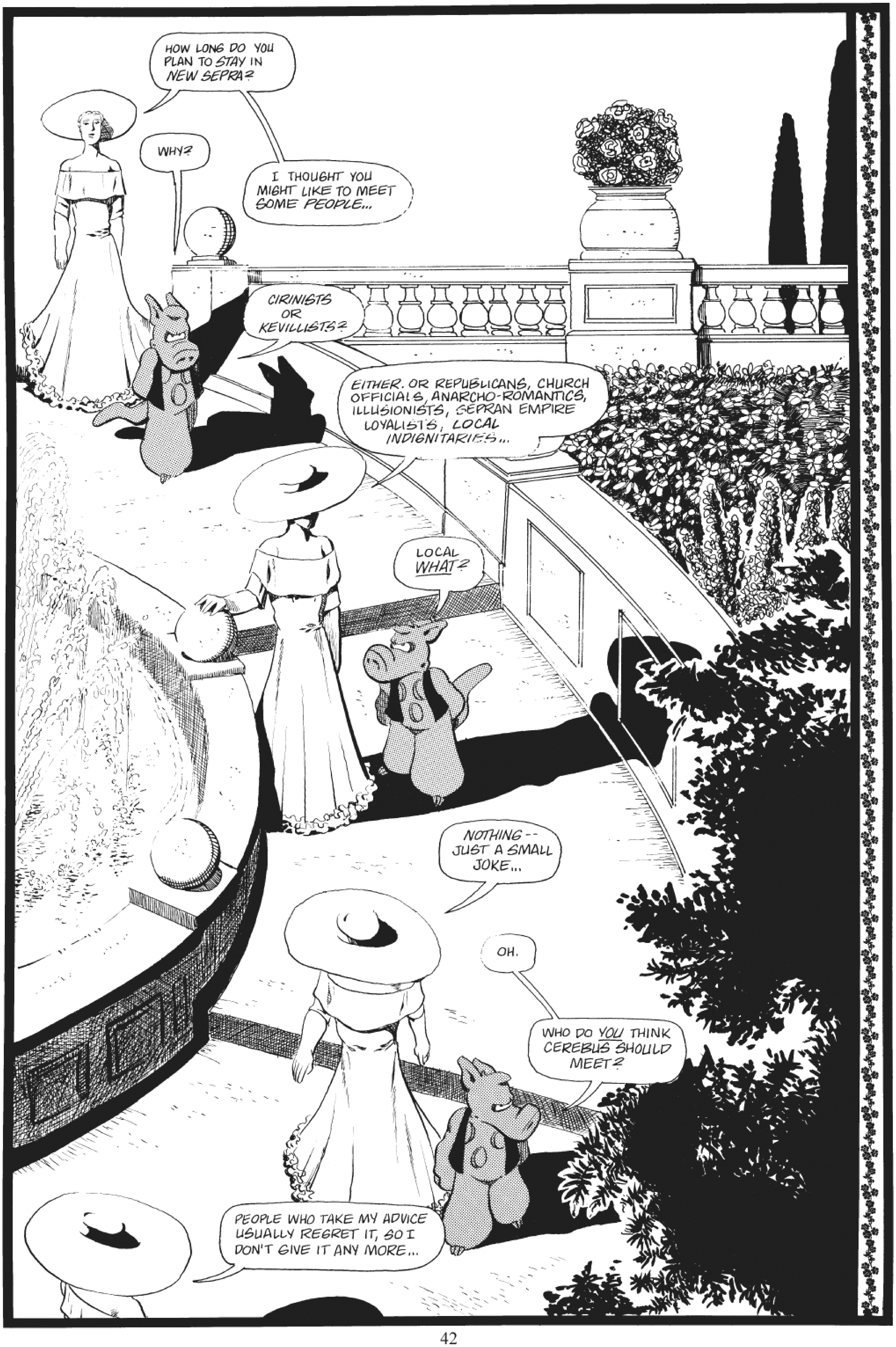
Cerebus helped to stop a revolution by the "Eye in the Pyramid," but the more Cerebus thinks about it, the more it seems that Lord Julius probably planned the whole revolution himself.

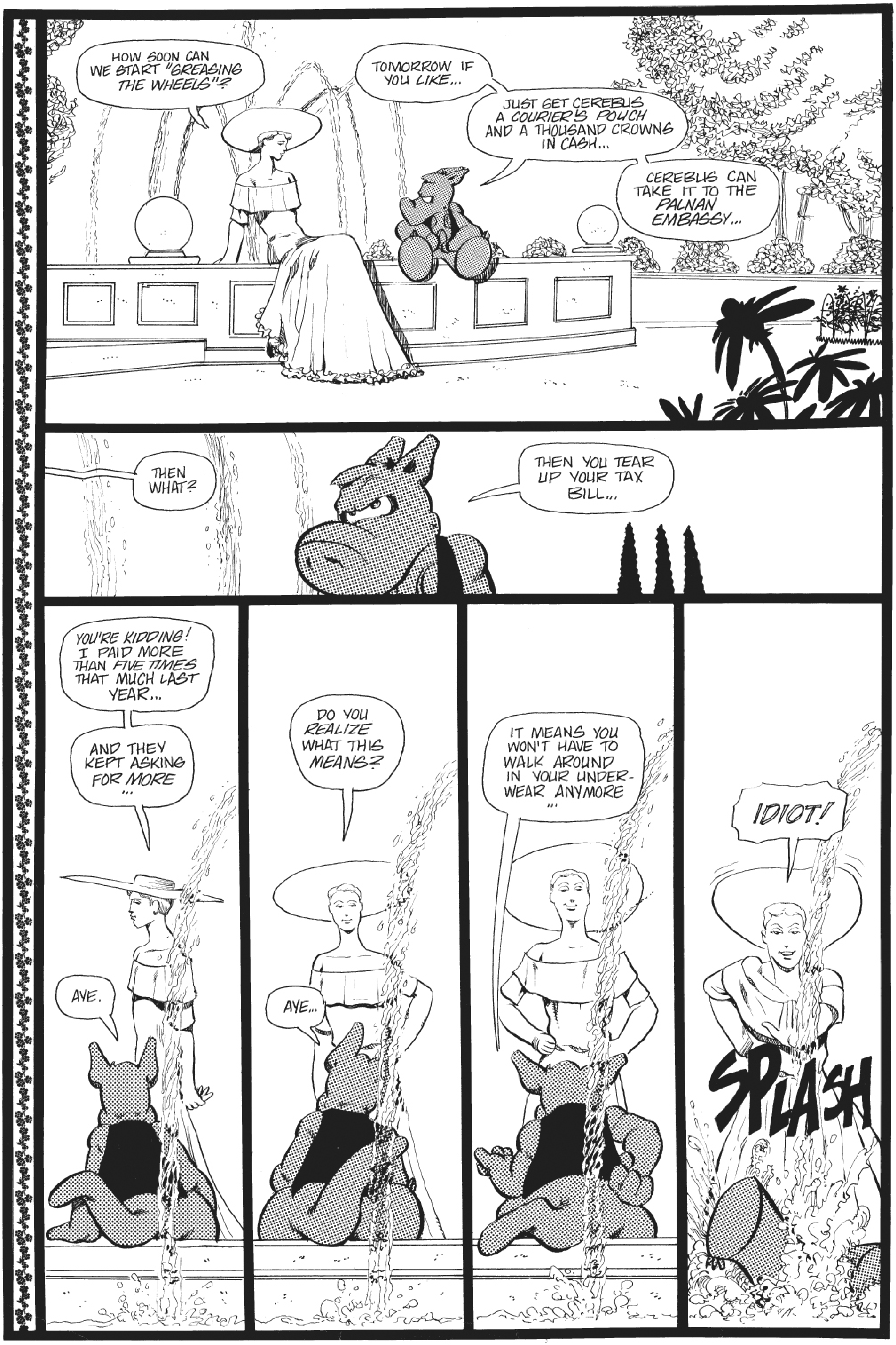
He also has a painted-on mustache instead of a real one.

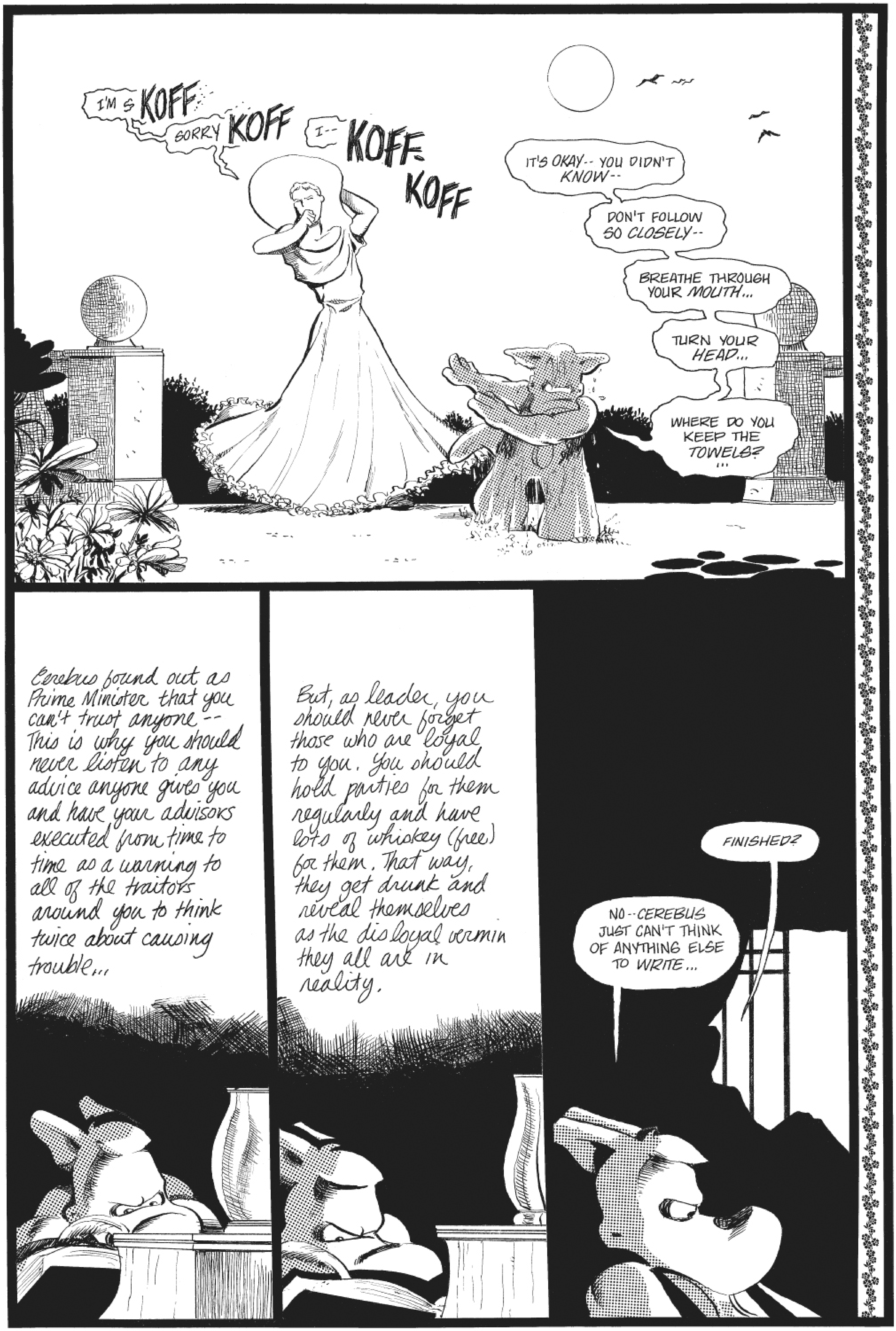

LOOKS LIKE THE *RAIN'S* LETTING UP...
DO YOU REALLY THINK *LORD JULIUS'* SON CAN GET ME A *DEFERRAL* ON MY *TAXES?* ...
NO -- BUT *CEREBUS* CAN...
REALLY? HOW...?
CEREBUS STILL HAS *FRIENDS* IN PANU. IT'LL TAKE SOME *GREASING OF THE WHEELS...* BUT CEREBUS CAN GET IT DONE...
HOW MUCH *"GREASE"* ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?
A FEW *HUNDRED* ...
MAYBE A THOUSAND AT THE *MOST...*
THAT'S PRETTY *GOOD...*
THAT'S NOT *BAD* AT ALL...
I'VE *ALREADY* SENT *FIVE HUNDRED* TO THE TRADE BUILDING FOR A *DIRECTORY* OF TAX OFFICIALS...
AND I STILL HAVEN'T *SEEN* IT...
WHY WON'T YOU TELL CEREBUS WHETHER YOU'RE A *CIRINIST* OR A *KEVILLIST?*

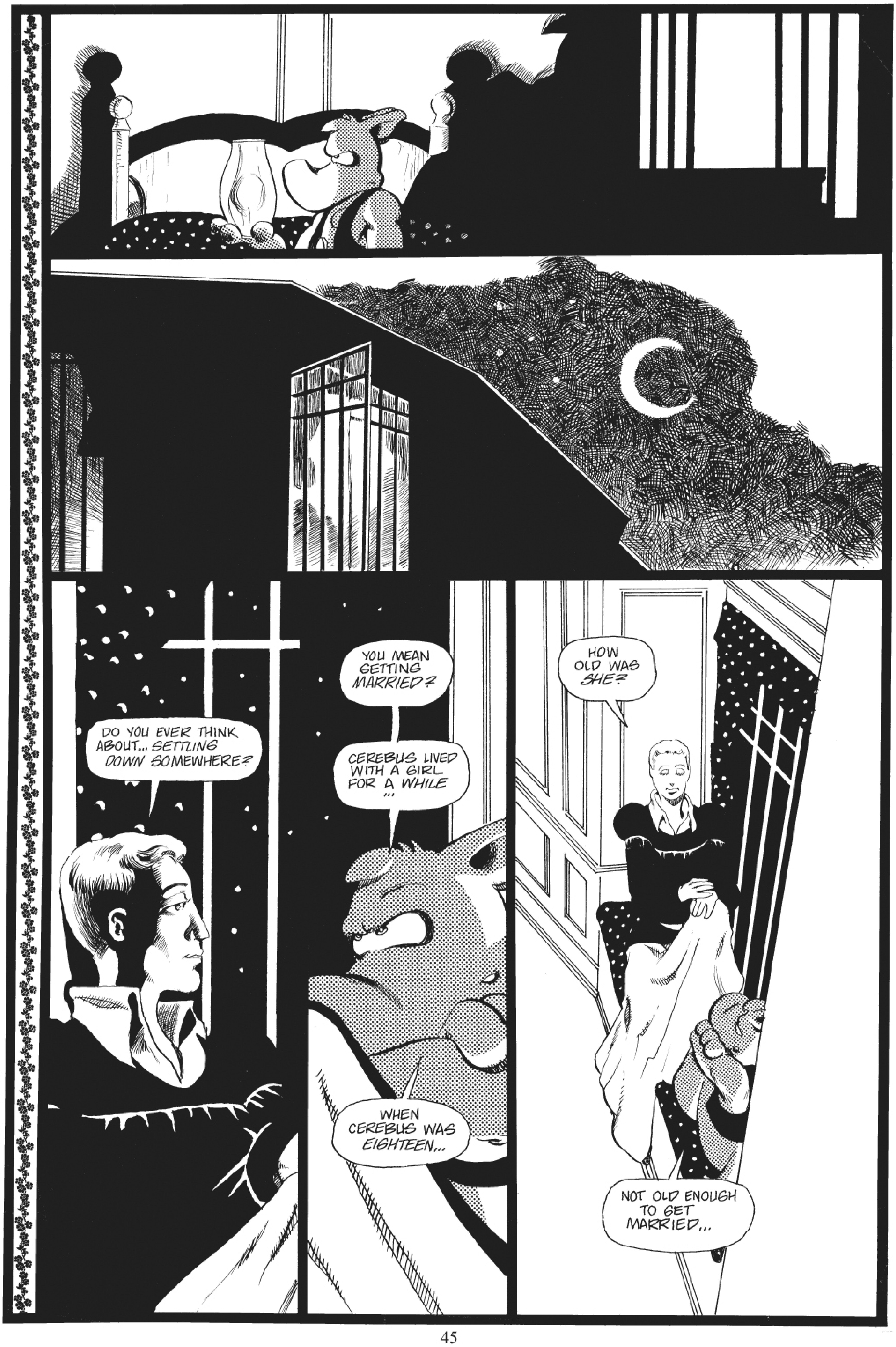

I GUESS BECAUSE I'M NOT REALLY SURE MYSELF...
I MEAN, I'VE READ "THE NEW MATRIARCHY" AND ALL OF THE PAMPHLETS ...
JUST READING THE HISTORICAL MATERIAL, WITHOUT CIRIN'S COMMENTARY, IT DOESN'T SAY VERY MUCH ABOUT CHILD-BIRTH...
I MEAN, I WANT TO -- SOMEDAY, IF I GET MARRIED AGAIN...
BUT THERE'S A GOOD CHANCE THAT I WON'T GET MARRIED...
SO WHAT POSSIBLE GOOD WOULD IT DO ME IF NEW SEPRA HAD A CIRINIST-LED GOVERNMENT? RIGHT?
UH...
I'VE INTERRUPTED YOUR WRITING... BESIDES WHICH, I REALLY SHOULD GET SOME SLEEP...
GOOD NIGHT...
WHY IS IT THAT EVERY TIME CEREBUS FINALLY GETS A STRAIGHT ANSWER FROM SOMEONE, IT ONLY MAKES HIM MORE CONFUSED ...

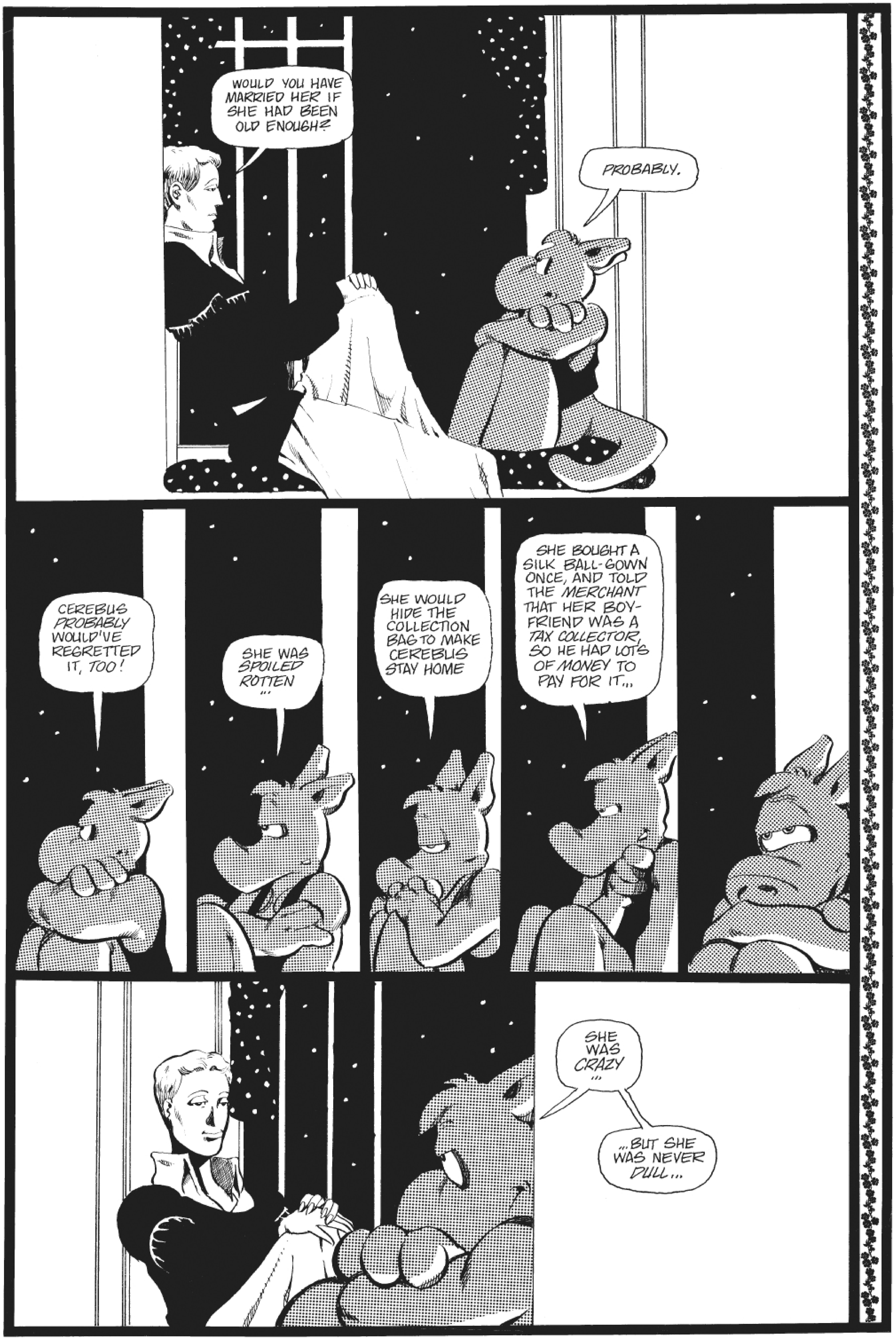

COUNTESS?
SHE'S OUT YONDER ON TH' PATTY-OO, Y' FLEA-BIT INTERLOPER, AN' IF'N Y'WANT EGGS, THAT'S TOO BAD, 'COZ SHE MADE TH' LAST OF 'EM FER ME!
HAW HAW HAW
YOUR SLIP IS SHOWING
AHM ONLY W'ARIN' THIS 'TIL MUH CLOTHES IS DRY!
THAT'S WHAT THEY ALL SAY...
WELL, WELL...LOOK WHO FINALLY WOKE UP...
SORRY— CEREBUS DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE IN YOUR UNDERWEAR...
IT'S A SUN DRESS, IDIOT.
OH.

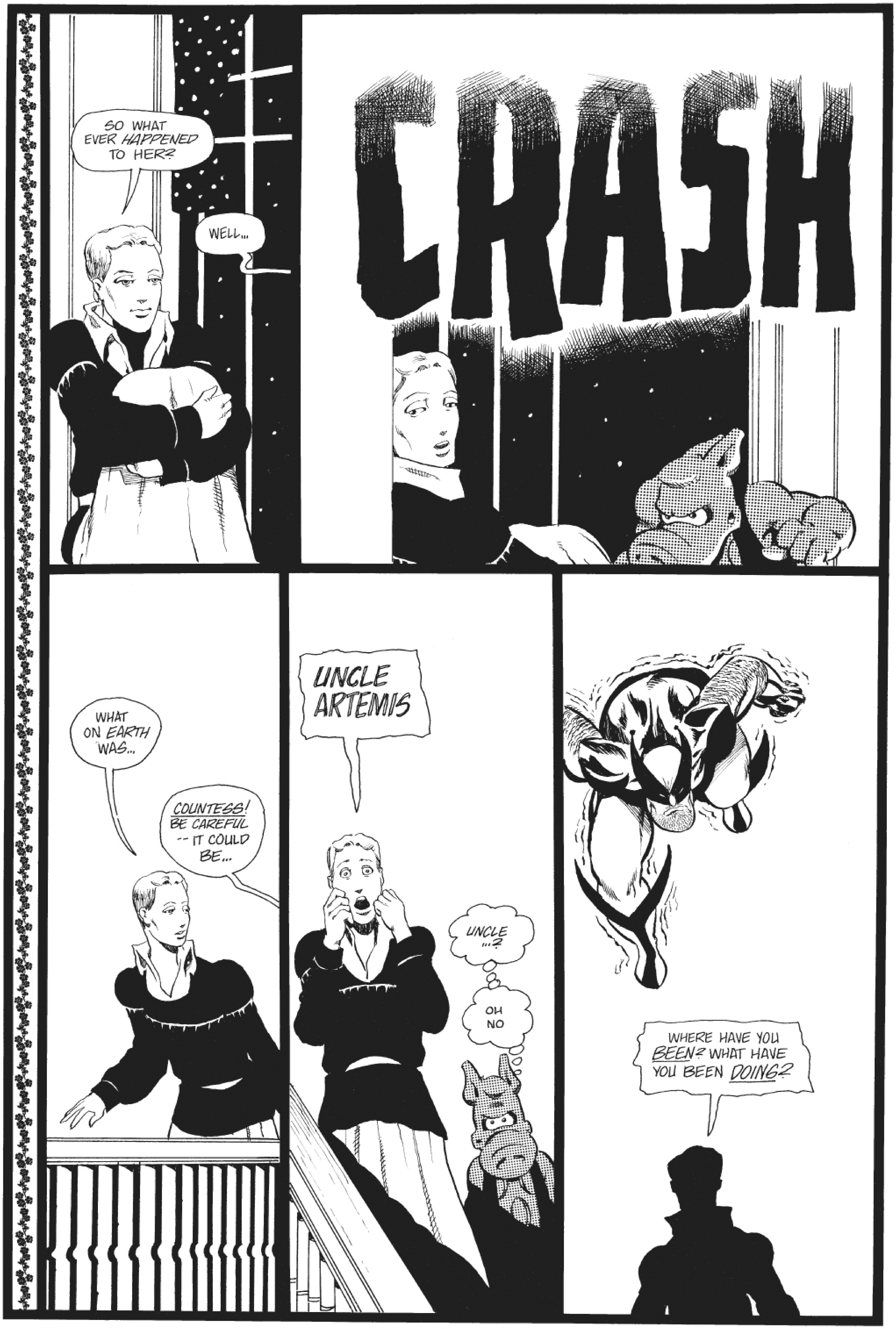

HOW LONG DO YOU PLAN TO *STAY* IN *NEW SEPRA?*
WHY?
I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT LIKE TO MEET SOME *PEOPLE...*
CIRINISTS OR KEVILLISTS?
EITHER. OR REPUBLICANS, CHURCH OFFICIALS, ANARCHO-ROMANTICS, ILLUSIONISTS, SEPRAN EMPIRE LOYALISTS, *LOCAL INDIGNITARIES...*
LOCAL WHAT?
NOTHING -- JUST A SMALL JOKE...
OH.
WHO DO *YOU* THINK CEREBUS SHOULD MEET?
PEOPLE WHO TAKE MY ADVICE USUALLY REGRET IT, SO I DON'T GIVE IT ANY MORE...

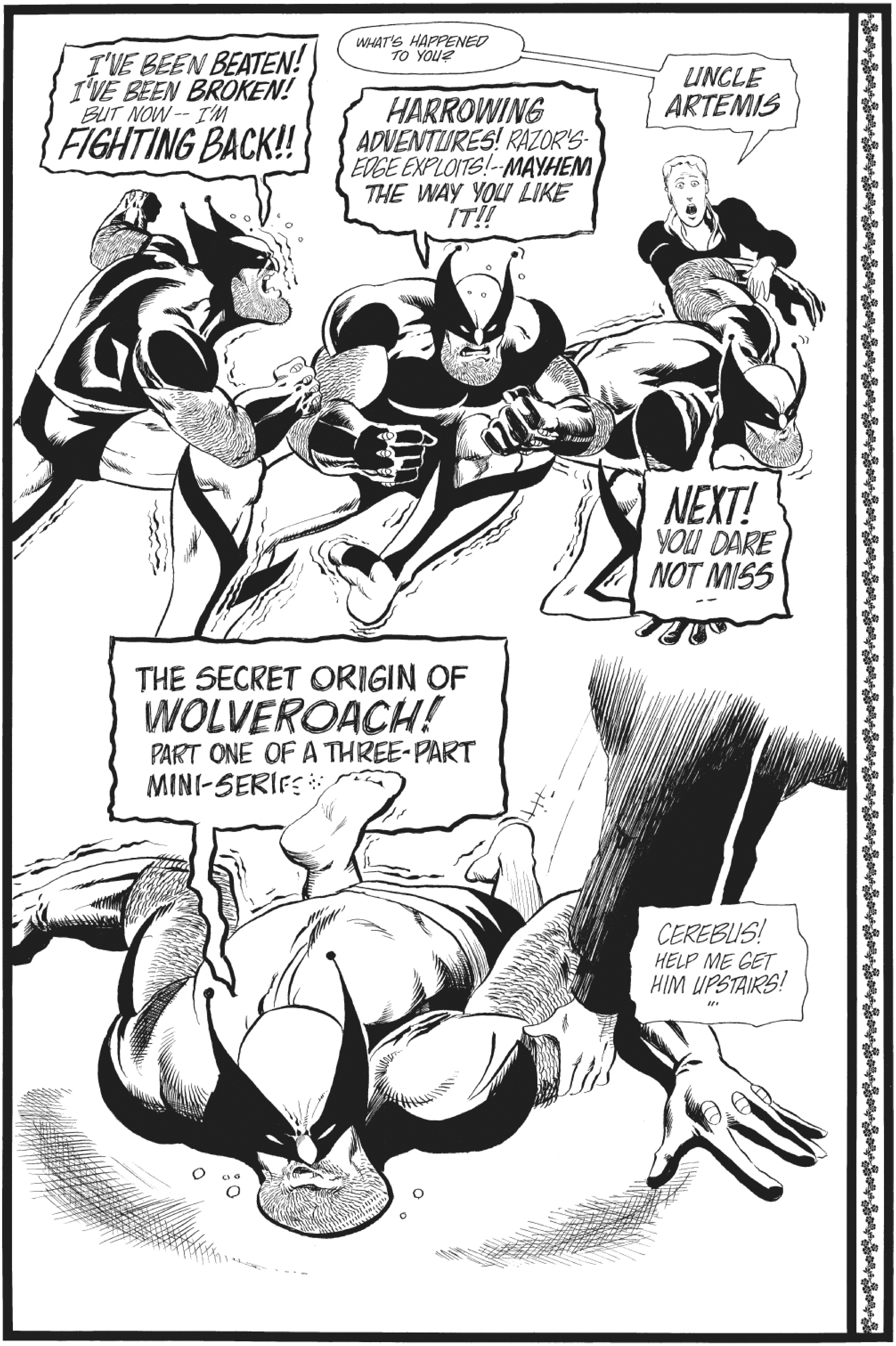

HOW SOON CAN WE START "GREASING THE WHEELS"?
TOMORROW IF YOU LIKE...
JUST GET CEREBUS A COURIER'S POUCH AND A THOUSAND CROWNS IN CASH...
CEREBUS CAN TAKE IT TO THE PALNAN EMBASSY...
THEN WHAT?
THEN YOU TEAR UP YOUR TAX BILL...
YOU'RE KIDDING! I PAID MORE THAN FIVE TIMES THAT MUCH LAST YEAR...
AND THEY KEPT ASKING FOR MORE...
AYE.
DO YOU REALIZE WHAT THIS MEANS?
AYE...
IT MEANS YOU WON'T HAVE TO WALK AROUND IN YOUR UNDERWEAR ANYMORE...
IDIOT!
SPLASH


I'M S KOFF
SORRY KOFF
I-- KOFF- KOFF
IT'S OKAY-- YOU DIDN'T KNOW--
DON'T FOLLOW SO CLOSELY--
BREATHE THROUGH YOUR MOUTH...
TURN YOUR HEAD...
WHERE DO YOU KEEP THE TOWELS? ...
Cerebus found out as Prime Minister that you can't trust anyone -- This is why you should never listen to any advice anyone gives you and have your advisors executed from time to time as a warning to all of the traitors around you to think twice about causing trouble...
But, as leader, you should never forget those who are loyal to you. You should hold parties for them regularly and have lots of whiskey (free) for them. That way, they get drunk and reveal themselves as the disloyal vermin they all are in reality.
FINISHED?
NO--CEREBUS JUST CAN'T THINK OF ANYTHING ELSE TO WRITE...

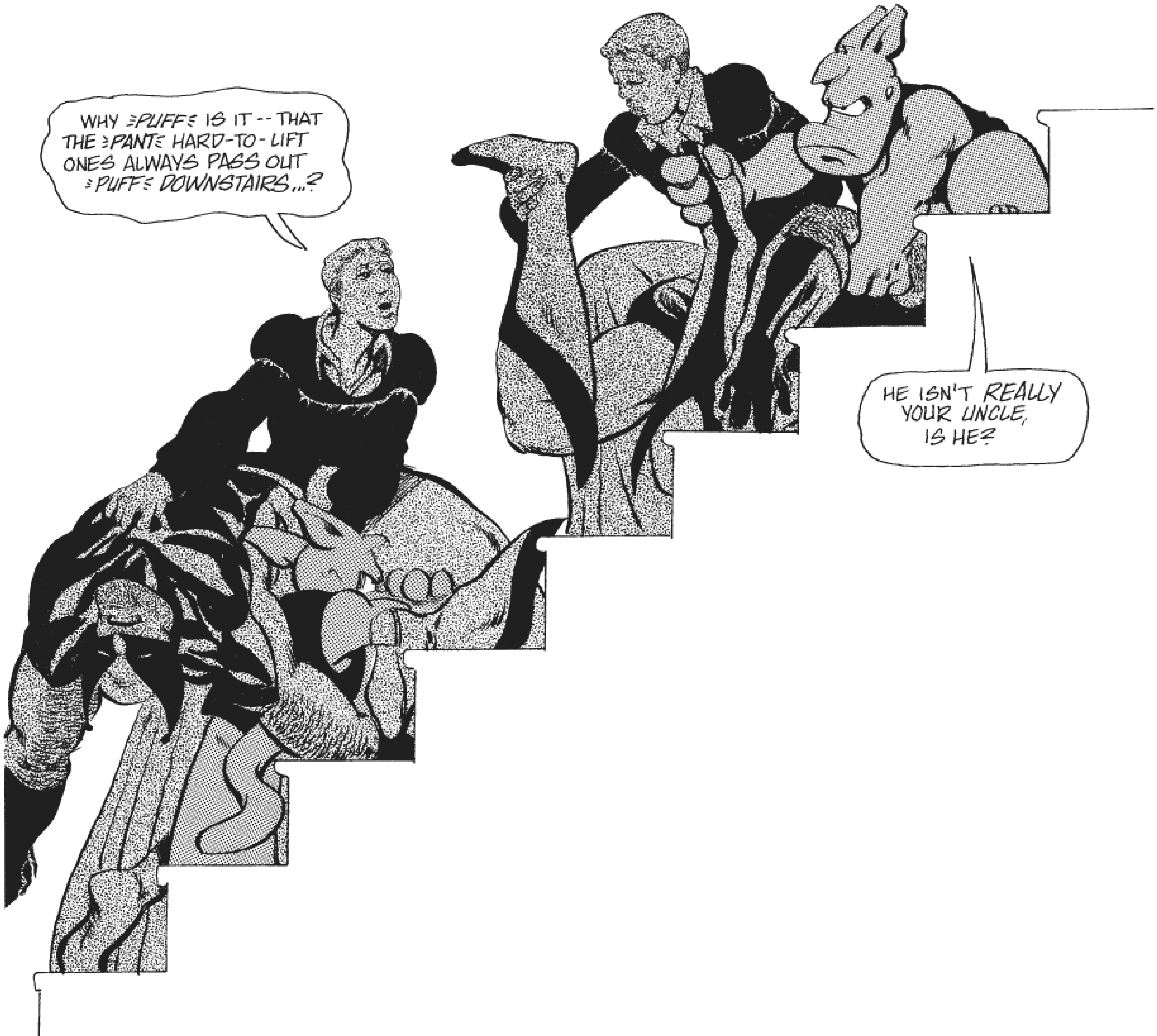

DO YOU EVER THINK ABOUT... SETTLING DOWN SOMEWHERE?
YOU MEAN GETTING MARRIED?
CEREBUS LIVED WITH A GIRL FOR A WHILE ...
WHEN CEREBUS WAS EIGHTEEN...
HOW OLD WAS SHE?
NOT OLD ENOUGH TO GET MARRIED...

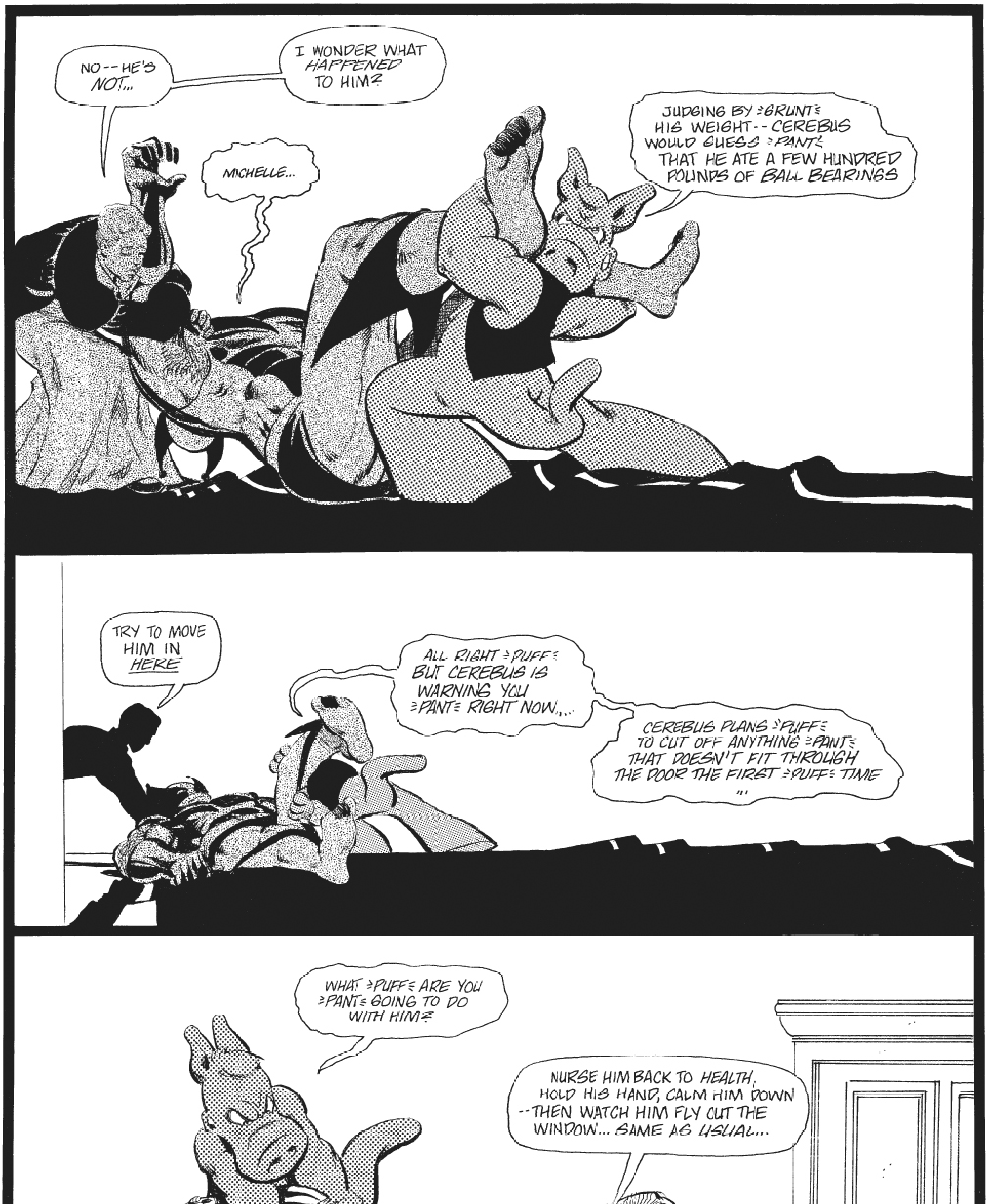

WOULD YOU HAVE MARRIED HER IF SHE HAD BEEN OLD ENOUGH?
PROBABLY.
CEREBUS *PROBABLY* WOULD'VE REGRETTED IT, *TOO*!
SHE WAS SPOILED ROTTEN ...
SHE WOULD HIDE THE COLLECTION BAG TO MAKE CEREBUS STAY HOME
SHE BOUGHT A SILK BALL-GOWN ONCE, AND TOLD THE *MERCHANT* THAT HER BOY-FRIEND WAS A *TAX COLLECTOR*, SO HE HAD LOTS OF *MONEY* TO PAY FOR IT...
SHE WAS *CRAZY* ...
...BUT SHE WAS NEVER *DULL*...

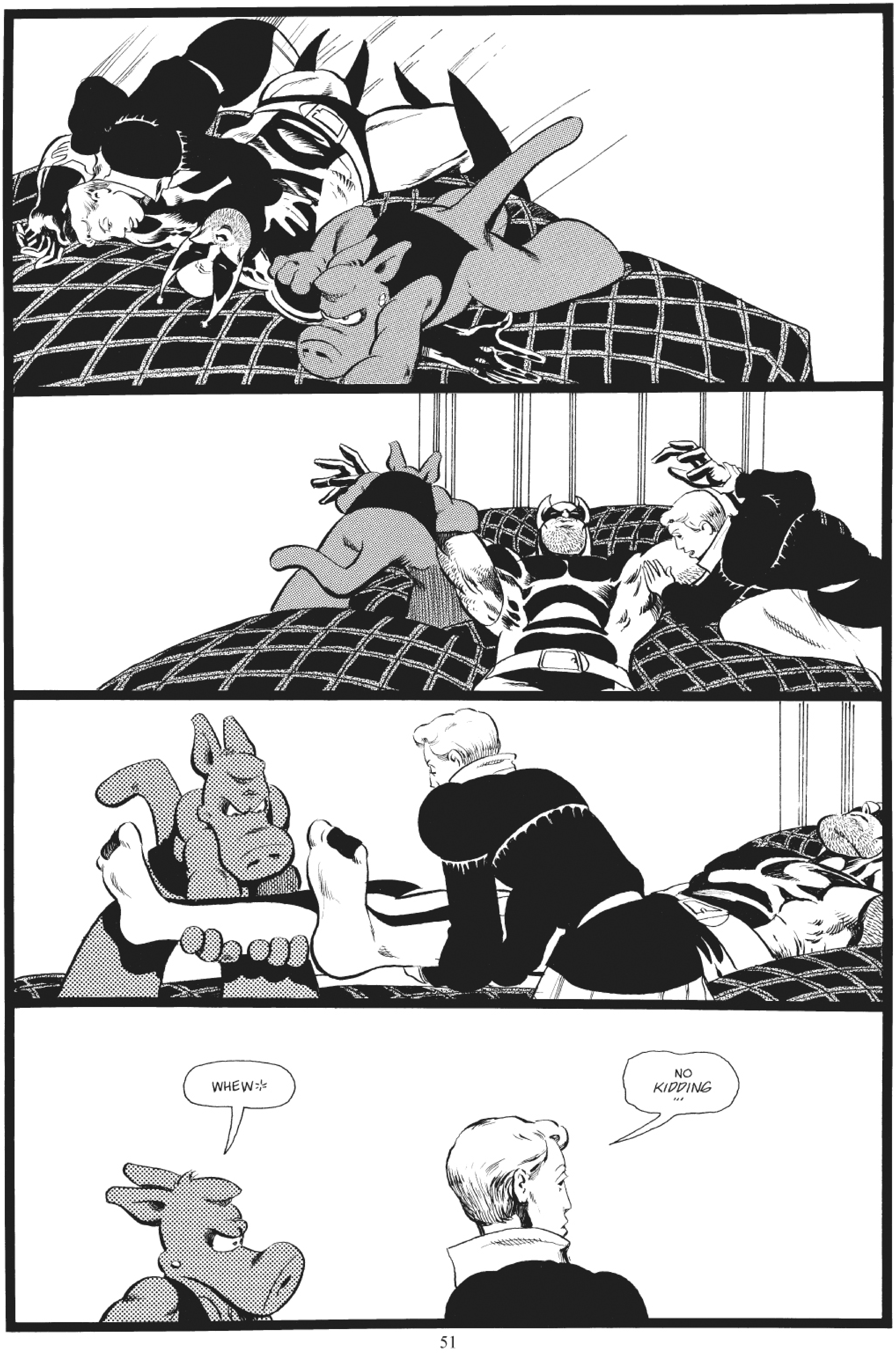

SO WHAT EVER *HAPPENED* TO HER?
WELL...
CRASH
WHAT ON *EARTH* WAS...
COUNTESS! BE CAREFUL -- IT COULD BE...
UNCLE ARTEMIS
UNCLE ...?
OH NO
WHERE HAVE YOU *BEEN?* WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN *DOING?*

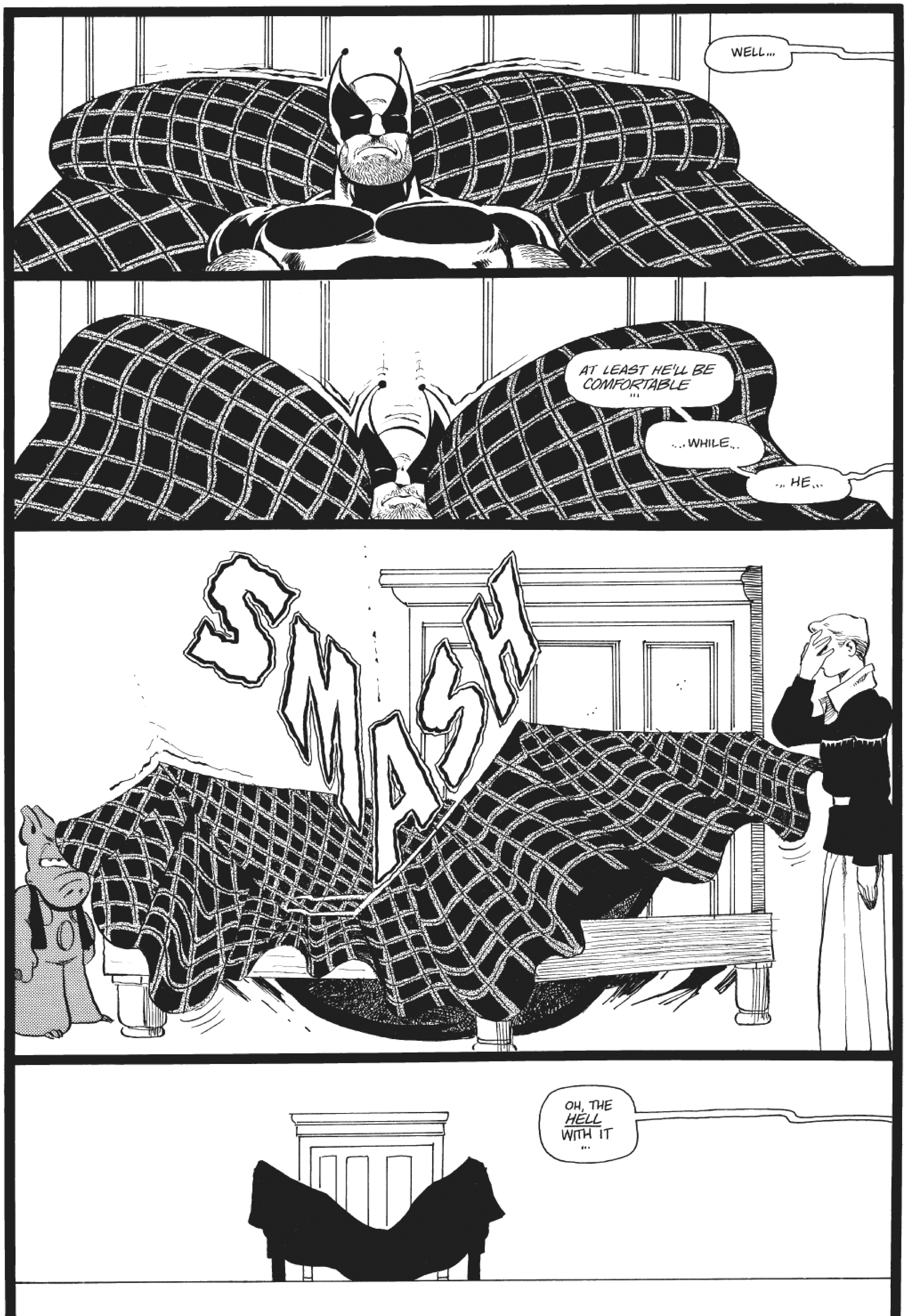

I'VE BEEN BEATEN! I'VE BEEN BROKEN! BUT NOW -- I'M FIGHTING BACK!!
WHAT'S HAPPENED TO YOU?
HARROWING ADVENTURES! RAZOR'S-EDGE EXPLOITS! -- MAYHEM THE WAY YOU LIKE IT!!
UNCLE ARTEMIS
NEXT! YOU DARE NOT MISS --
THE SECRET ORIGIN OF WOLVEROACH! PART ONE OF A THREE-PART MINI-SERIES...
CEREBUS! HELP ME GET HIM UPSTAIRS! ...

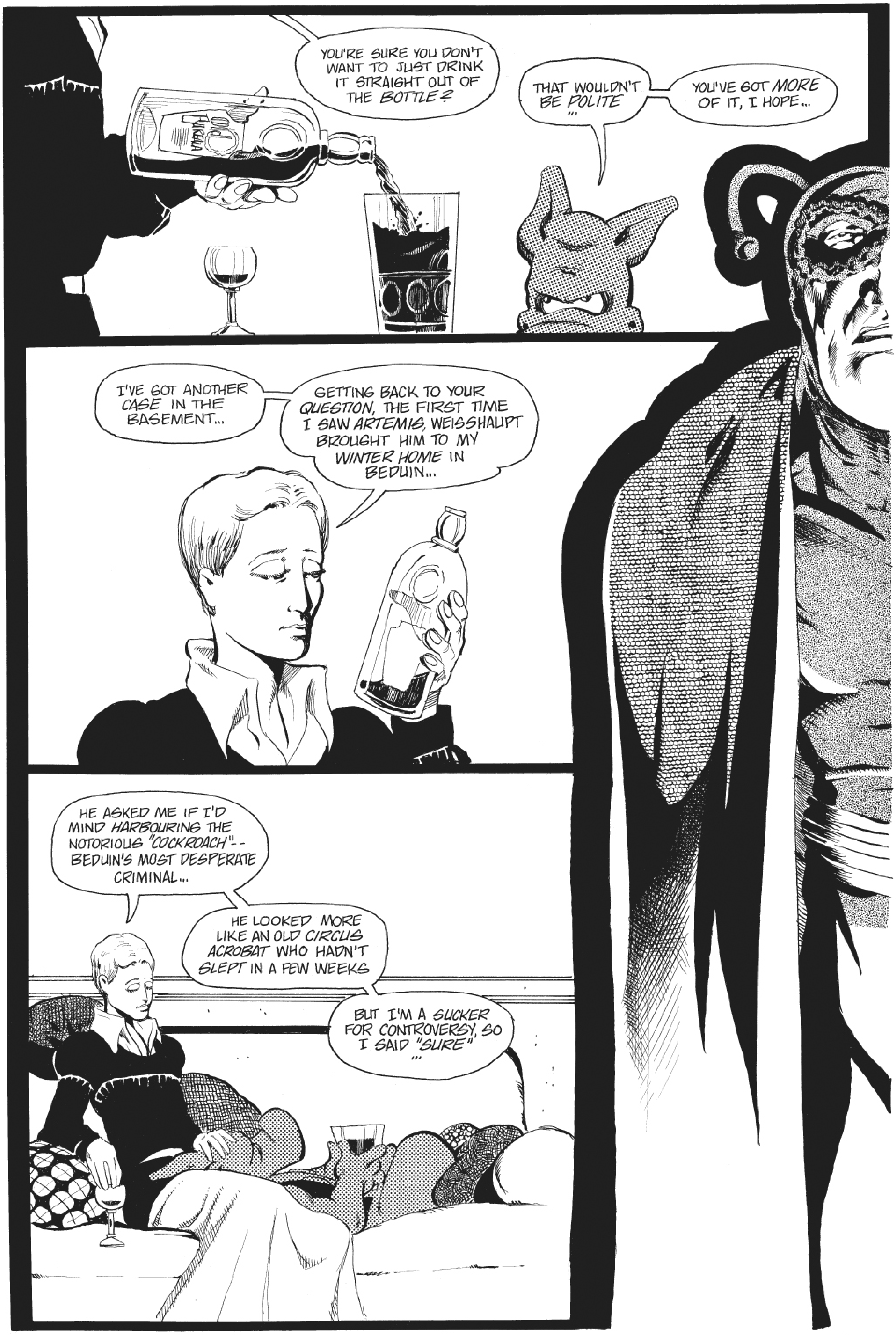
THE ORIGIN OF THE WOLVEROACH

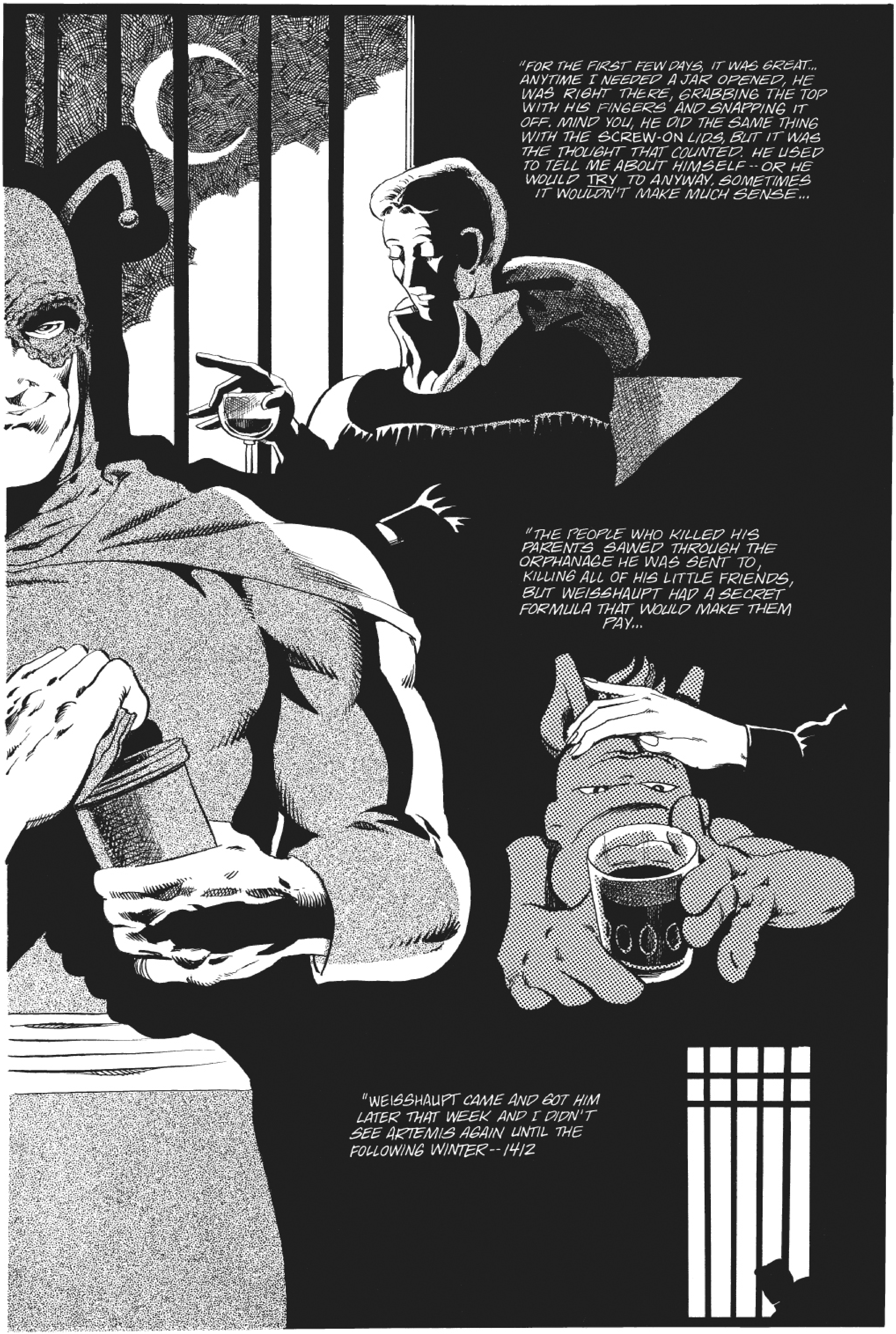

WHY ≡PUFF≡ IS IT -- THAT THE ≡PANT≡ HARD-TO-LIFT ONES ALWAYS PASS OUT ≡PUFF≡ DOWNSTAIRS...?
HE ISN'T REALLY YOUR UNCLE, IS HE?

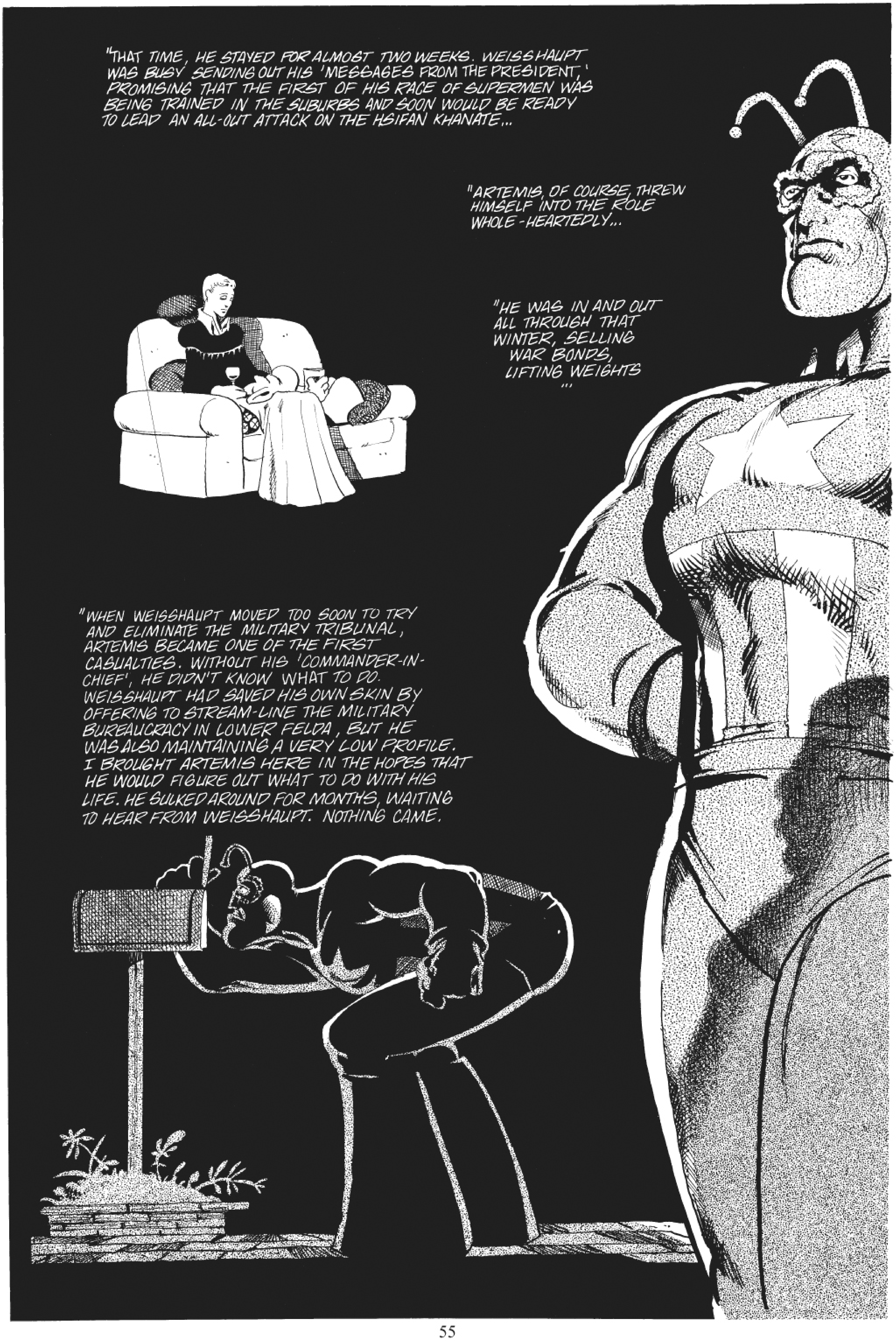

NO-- HE'S *NOT*...
I WONDER WHAT *HAPPENED* TO HIM?
MICHELLE...
JUDGING BY =GRUNT= HIS WEIGHT--CEREBUS WOULD GUESS =PANT= THAT HE ATE A FEW HUNDRED POUNDS OF *BALL BEARINGS*
TRY TO MOVE HIM IN *HERE*
ALL RIGHT =PUFF= BUT CEREBUS IS WARNING YOU =PANT= RIGHT NOW...
CEREBUS PLANS =PUFF= TO CUT OFF ANYTHING =PANT= THAT DOESN'T FIT THROUGH THE DOOR THE FIRST =PUFF= TIME ...
WHAT =PUFF= ARE YOU =PANT= GOING TO DO WITH HIM?
NURSE HIM BACK TO *HEALTH*, HOLD HIS HAND, CALM HIM DOWN --THEN WATCH HIM FLY OUT THE WINDOW... SAME AS *USUAL*...

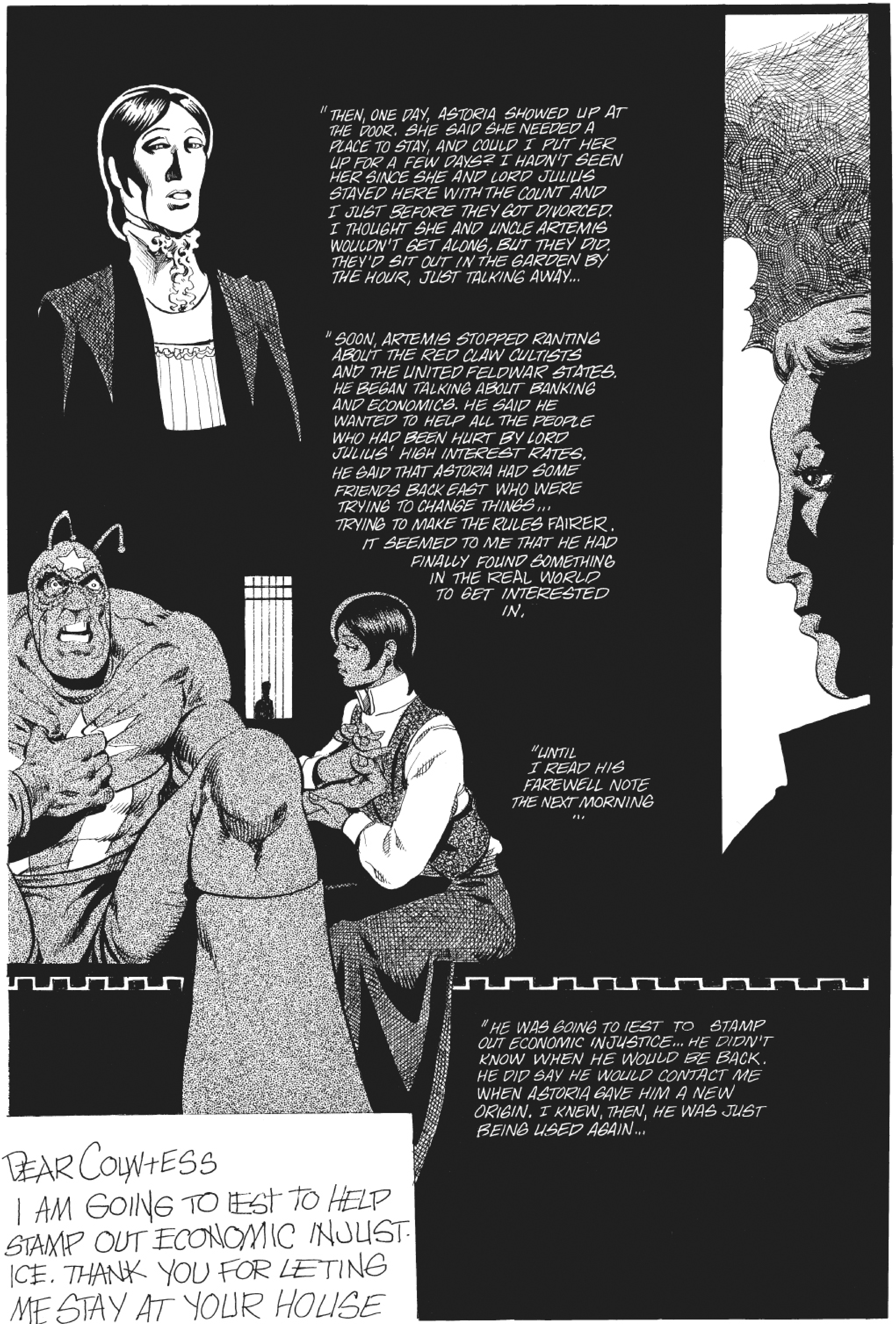

WHEW⁎
NO KIDDING ...


WELL...
AT LEAST HE'LL BE COMFORTABLE ...
...WHILE...
...HE...
SMASH
OH, THE HELL WITH IT ...


YOU'RE SURE YOU DON'T WANT TO JUST DRINK IT STRAIGHT OUT OF THE *BOTTLE?*
THAT WOULDN'T BE *POLITE* ...
YOU'VE GOT *MORE* OF IT, I HOPE...
I'VE GOT ANOTHER *CASE* IN THE BASEMENT...
GETTING BACK TO YOUR *QUESTION*, THE FIRST TIME I SAW *ARTEMIS*, WEISSHAUPT BROUGHT HIM TO MY *WINTER HOME* IN BEDUIN...
HE ASKED ME IF I'D MIND *HARBOURING* THE NOTORIOUS *"COCKROACH"* -- BEDUIN'S MOST DESPERATE CRIMINAL...
HE LOOKED MORE LIKE AN OLD *CIRCUS ACROBAT* WHO HADN'T *SLEPT* IN A FEW WEEKS
BUT I'M A *SUCKER* FOR CONTROVERSY, SO I SAID *"SURE"* ...

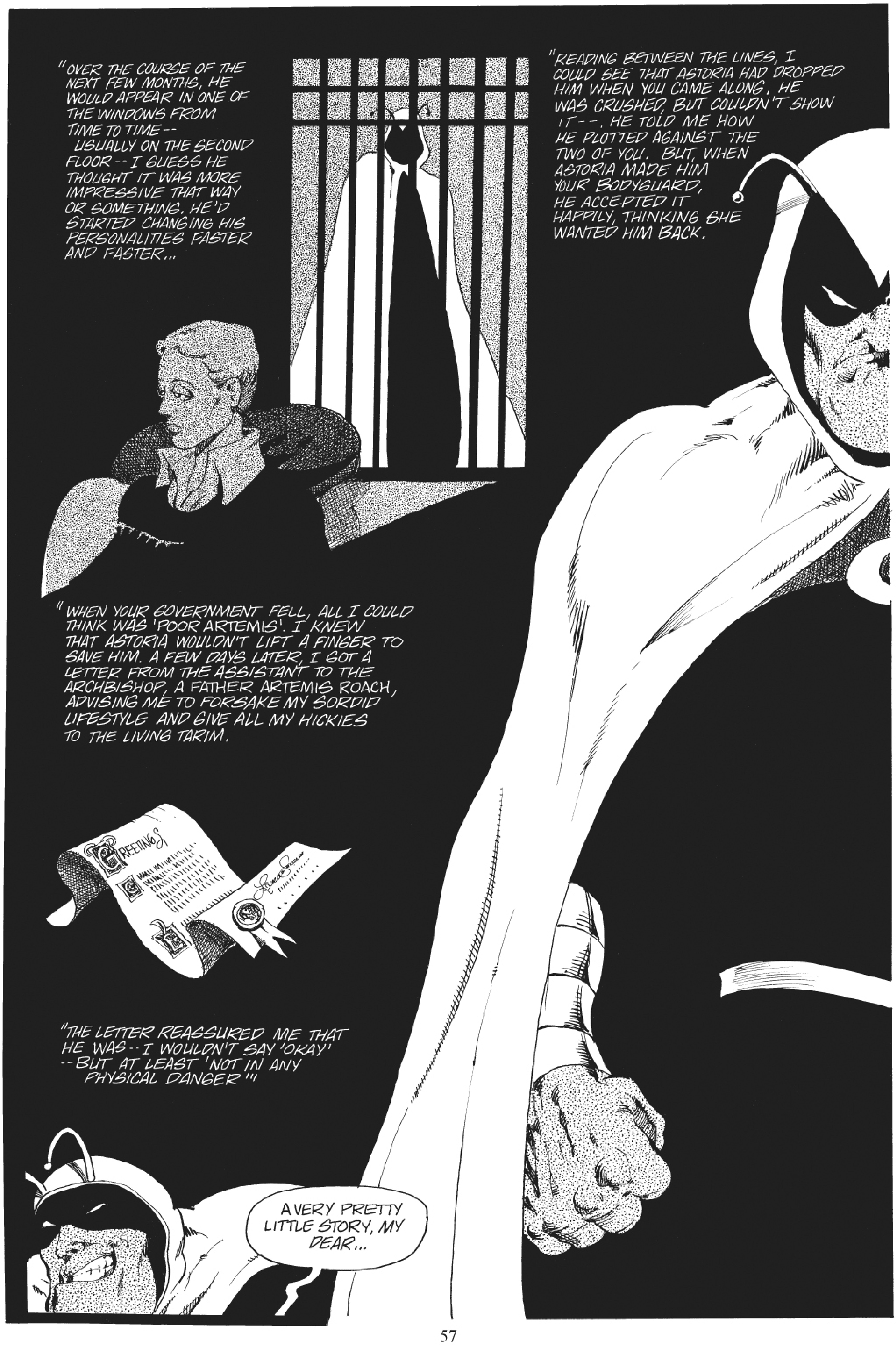

"FOR THE FIRST FEW DAYS, IT WAS GREAT... ANYTIME I NEEDED A JAR OPENED, HE WAS RIGHT THERE, GRABBING THE TOP WITH HIS FINGERS AND SNAPPING IT OFF. MIND YOU, HE DID THE SAME THING WITH THE SCREW-ON LIDS, BUT IT WAS THE THOUGHT THAT COUNTED. HE USED TO TELL ME ABOUT HIMSELF -- OR HE WOULD TRY TO ANYWAY. SOMETIMES IT WOULDN'T MAKE MUCH SENSE...
"THE PEOPLE WHO KILLED HIS PARENTS SAWED THROUGH THE ORPHANAGE HE WAS SENT TO, KILLING ALL OF HIS LITTLE FRIENDS, BUT WEISSHAUPT HAD A SECRET FORMULA THAT WOULD MAKE THEM PAY...
"WEISSHAUPT CAME AND GOT HIM LATER THAT WEEK AND I DIDN'T SEE ARTEMIS AGAIN UNTIL THE FOLLOWING WINTER -- 1412

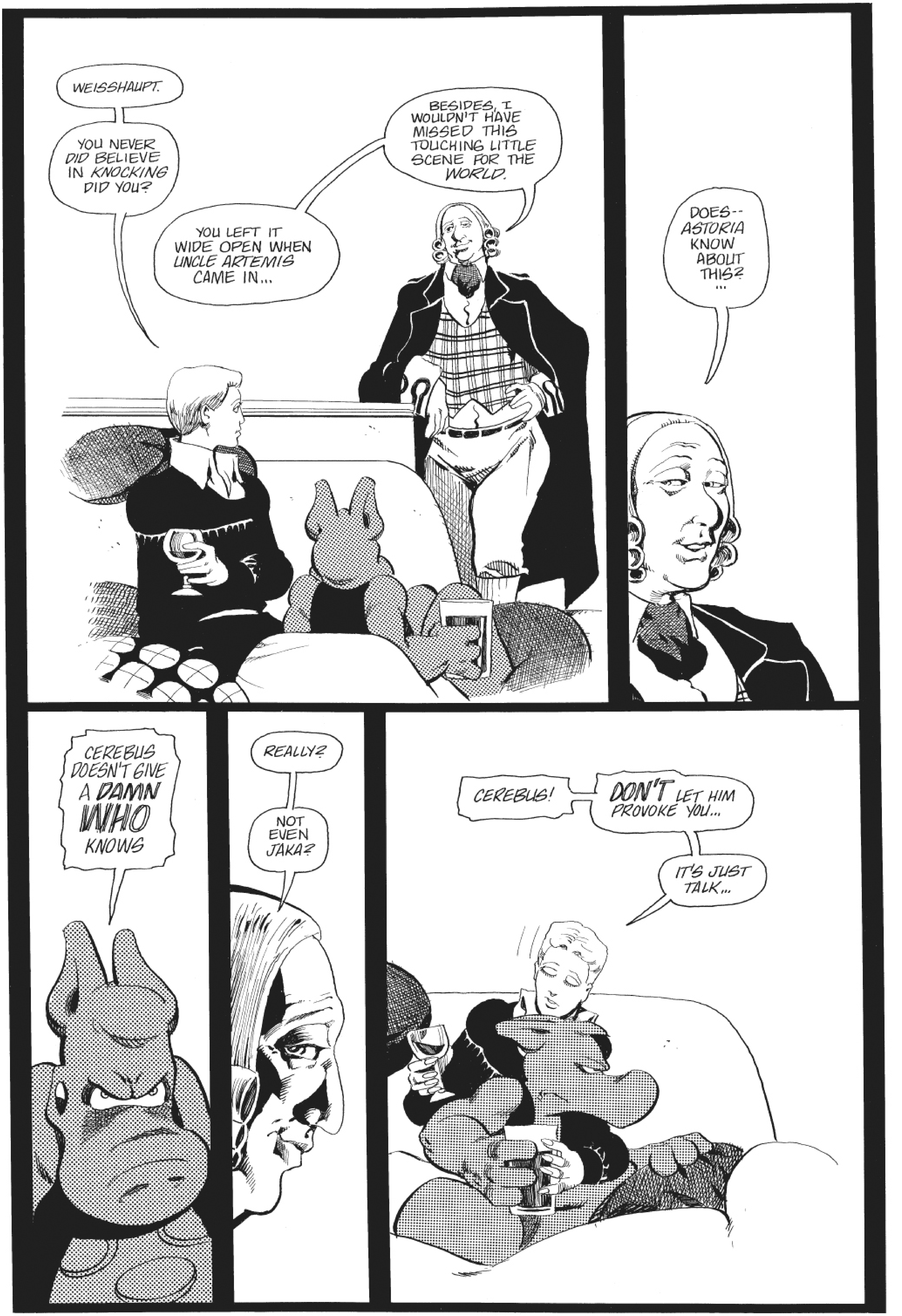

"THAT TIME, HE STAYED FOR ALMOST TWO WEEKS. WEISSHAUPT WAS BUSY SENDING OUT HIS 'MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT,' PROMISING THAT THE FIRST OF HIS RACE OF SUPERMEN WAS BEING TRAINED IN THE SUBURBS AND SOON WOULD BE READY TO LEAD AN ALL-OUT ATTACK ON THE HSIFAN KHANATE...
"ARTEMIS, OF COURSE, THREW HIMSELF INTO THE ROLE WHOLE-HEARTEDLY...
"HE WAS IN AND OUT ALL THROUGH THAT WINTER, SELLING WAR BONDS, LIFTING WEIGHTS...
"WHEN WEISSHAUPT MOVED TOO SOON TO TRY AND ELIMINATE THE MILITARY TRIBUNAL, ARTEMIS BECAME ONE OF THE FIRST CASUALTIES. WITHOUT HIS 'COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF', HE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO. WEISSHAUPT HAD SAVED HIS OWN SKIN BY OFFERING TO STREAM-LINE THE MILITARY BUREAUCRACY IN LOWER FELDA, BUT HE WAS ALSO MAINTAINING A VERY LOW PROFILE. I BROUGHT ARTEMIS HERE IN THE HOPES THAT HE WOULD FIGURE OUT WHAT TO DO WITH HIS LIFE. HE SULKED AROUND FOR MONTHS, WAITING TO HEAR FROM WEISSHAUPT. NOTHING CAME.

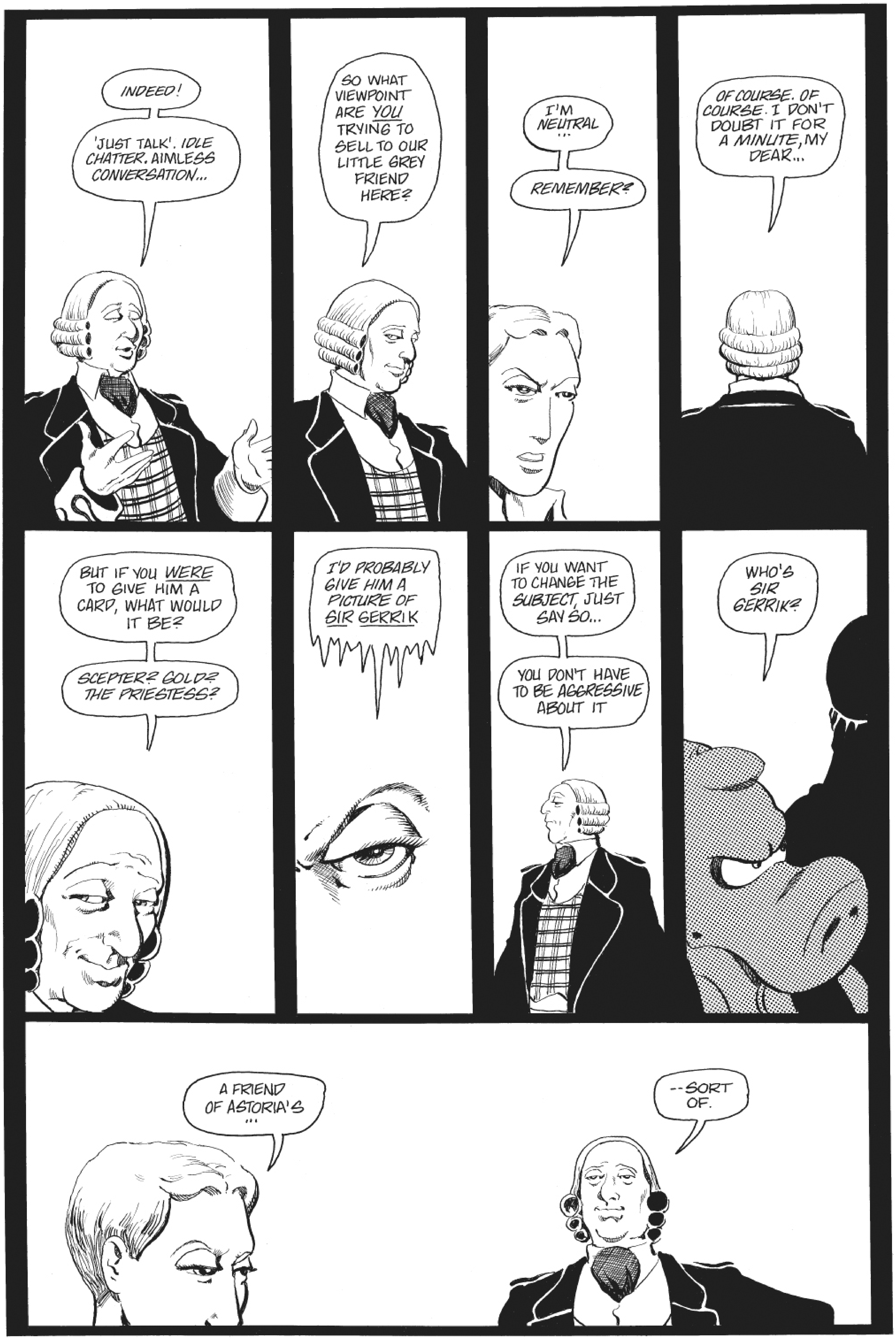

"THEN, ONE DAY, ASTORIA SHOWED UP AT THE DOOR. SHE SAID SHE NEEDED A PLACE TO STAY, AND COULD I PUT HER UP FOR A FEW DAYS? I HADN'T SEEN HER SINCE SHE AND LORD JULIUS STAYED HERE WITH THE COUNT AND I JUST BEFORE THEY GOT DIVORCED. I THOUGHT SHE AND UNCLE ARTEMIS WOULDN'T GET ALONG, BUT THEY DID. THEY'D SIT OUT IN THE GARDEN BY THE HOUR, JUST TALKING AWAY...
"SOON, ARTEMIS STOPPED RANTING ABOUT THE RED CLAW CULTISTS AND THE UNITED FELDWAR STATES. HE BEGAN TALKING ABOUT BANKING AND ECONOMICS. HE SAID HE WANTED TO HELP ALL THE PEOPLE WHO HAD BEEN HURT BY LORD JULIUS' HIGH INTEREST RATES. HE SAID THAT ASTORIA HAD SOME FRIENDS BACK EAST WHO WERE TRYING TO CHANGE THINGS... TRYING TO MAKE THE RULES FAIRER. IT SEEMED TO ME THAT HE HAD FINALLY FOUND SOMETHING IN THE REAL WORLD TO GET INTERESTED IN.
"UNTIL I READ HIS FAREWELL NOTE THE NEXT MORNING ...
"HE WAS GOING TO IEST TO STAMP OUT ECONOMIC INJUSTICE... HE DIDN'T KNOW WHEN HE WOULD BE BACK. HE DID SAY HE WOULD CONTACT ME WHEN ASTORIA GAVE HIM A NEW ORIGIN. I KNEW, THEN, HE WAS JUST BEING USED AGAIN...

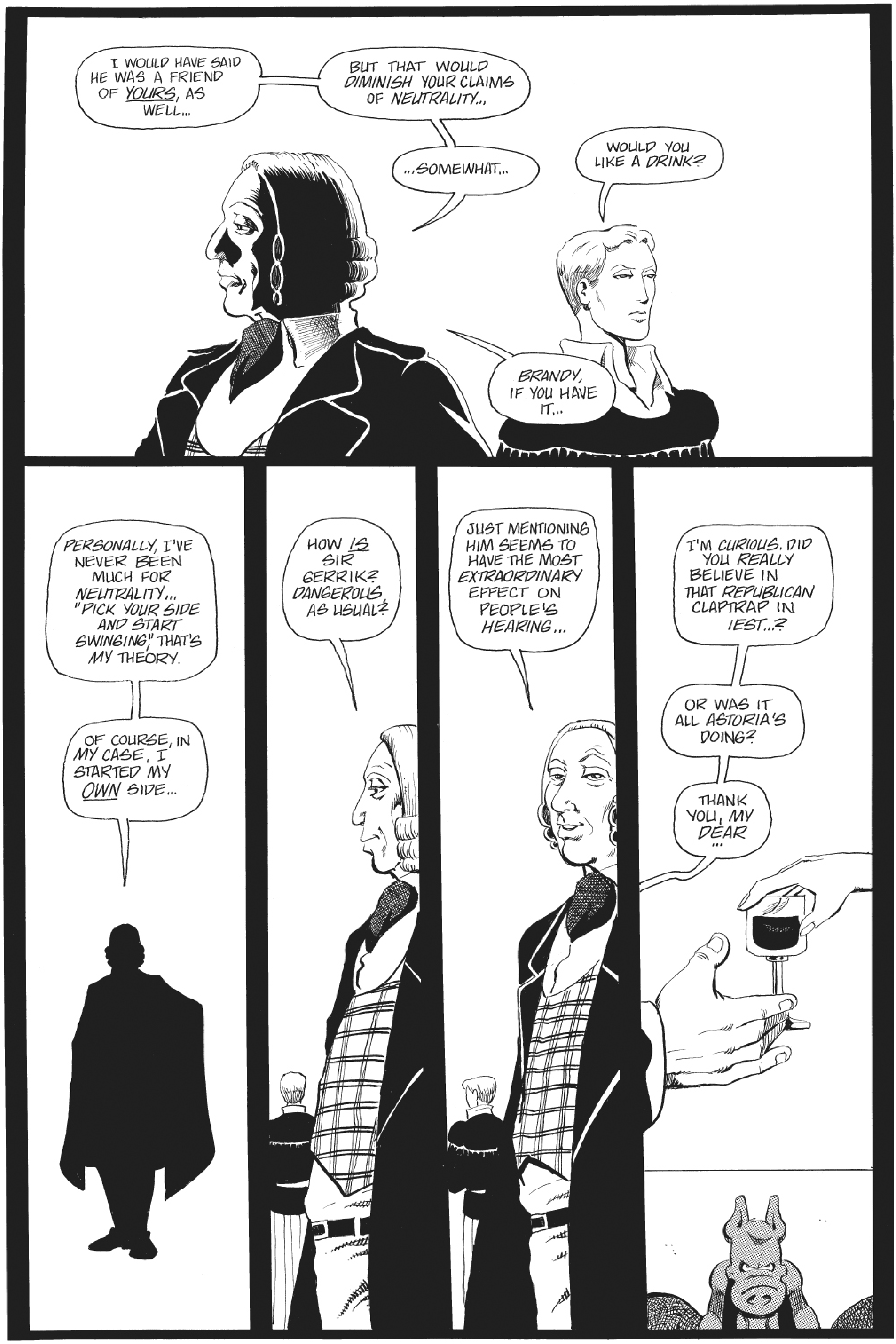
DEAR COUNTESS

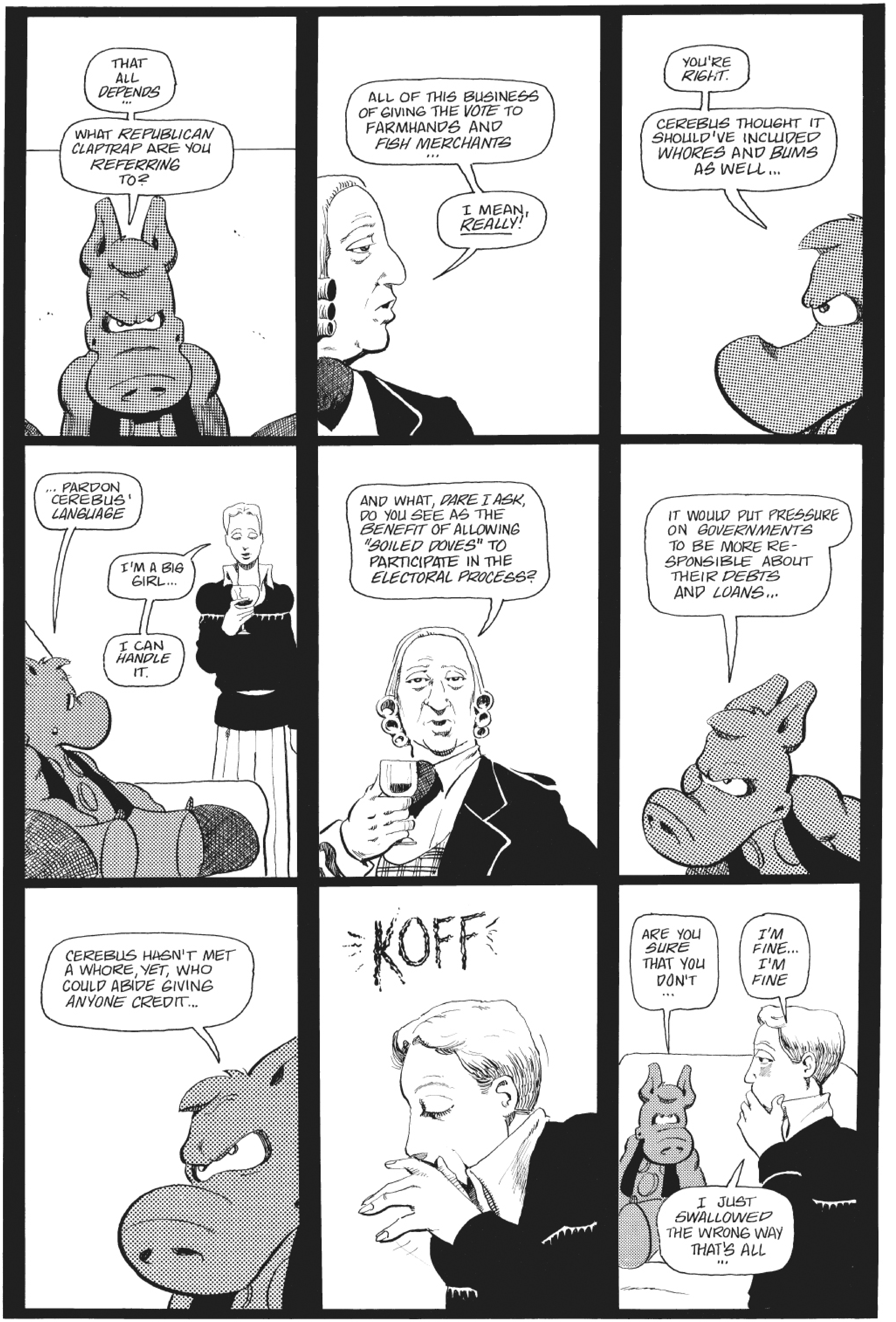
I AM GOING TO IEST TO HELP STAMP OUT ECONOMIC INJUSTICE. THANK YOU FOR LETING ME STAY AT YOUR HOUSE

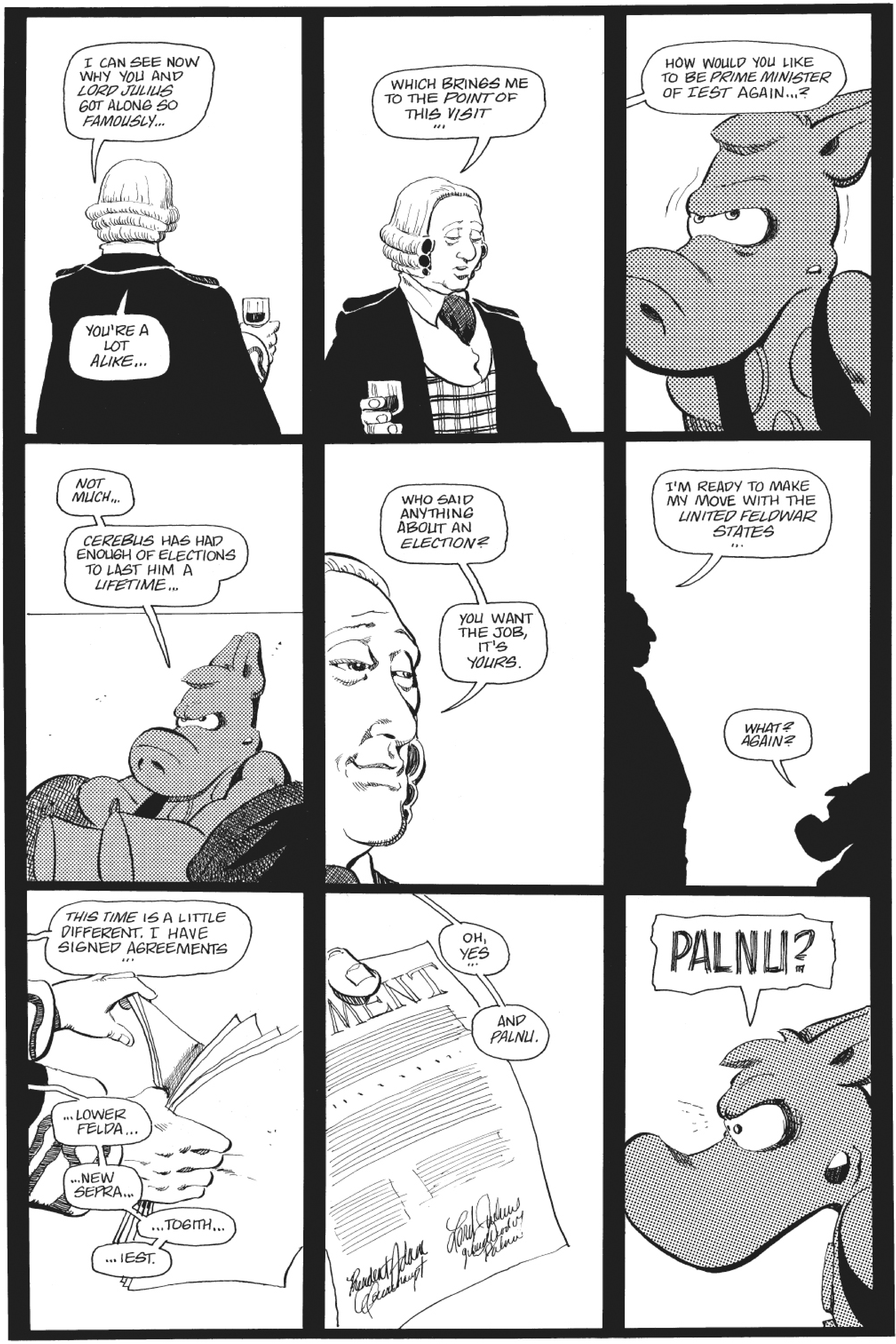

"OVER THE COURSE OF THE NEXT FEW MONTHS, HE WOULD APPEAR IN ONE OF THE WINDOWS FROM TIME TO TIME-- USUALLY ON THE SECOND FLOOR -- I GUESS HE THOUGHT IT WAS MORE IMPRESSIVE THAT WAY OR SOMETHING. HE'D STARTED CHANGING HIS PERSONALITIES FASTER AND FASTER...
"READING BETWEEN THE LINES, I COULD SEE THAT ASTORIA HAD DROPPED HIM WHEN YOU CAME ALONG. HE WAS CRUSHED, BUT COULDN'T SHOW IT--. HE TOLD ME HOW HE PLOTTED AGAINST THE TWO OF YOU. BUT, WHEN ASTORIA MADE HIM YOUR BODYGUARD, HE ACCEPTED IT HAPPILY, THINKING SHE WANTED HIM BACK.
"WHEN YOUR GOVERNMENT FELL, ALL I COULD THINK WAS 'POOR ARTEMIS'. I KNEW THAT ASTORIA WOULDN'T LIFT A FINGER TO SAVE HIM. A FEW DAYS LATER, I GOT A LETTER FROM THE ASSISTANT TO THE ARCHBISHOP, A FATHER ARTEMIS ROACH, ADVISING ME TO FORSAKE MY SORDID LIFESTYLE AND GIVE ALL MY HICKIES TO THE LIVING TARIM.
GREETINGS
"THE LETTER REASSURED ME THAT HE WAS -- I WOULDN'T SAY 'OKAY' -- BUT AT LEAST 'NOT IN ANY PHYSICAL DANGER'"
A VERY PRETTY LITTLE STORY, MY DEAR...

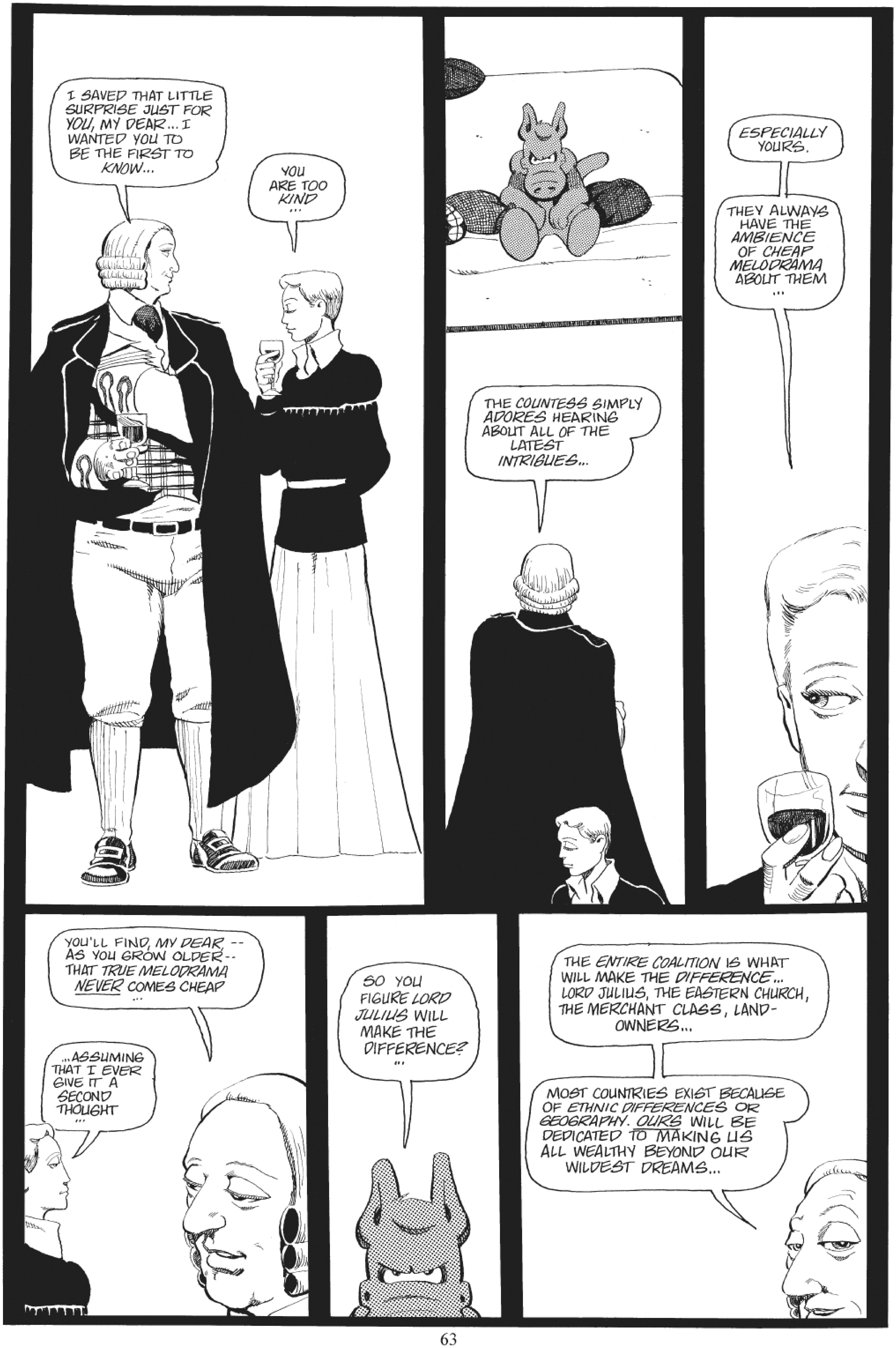

WEISSHAUPT.
YOU NEVER DID BELIEVE IN KNOCKING DID YOU?
YOU LEFT IT WIDE OPEN WHEN UNCLE ARTEMIS CAME IN...
BESIDES, I WOULDN'T HAVE MISSED THIS TOUCHING LITTLE SCENE FOR THE WORLD.
DOES-- ASTORIA KNOW ABOUT THIS? ...
CEREBUS DOESN'T GIVE A DAMN WHO KNOWS
REALLY?
NOT EVEN JAKA?
CEREBUS!
DON'T LET HIM PROVOKE YOU...
IT'S JUST TALK...

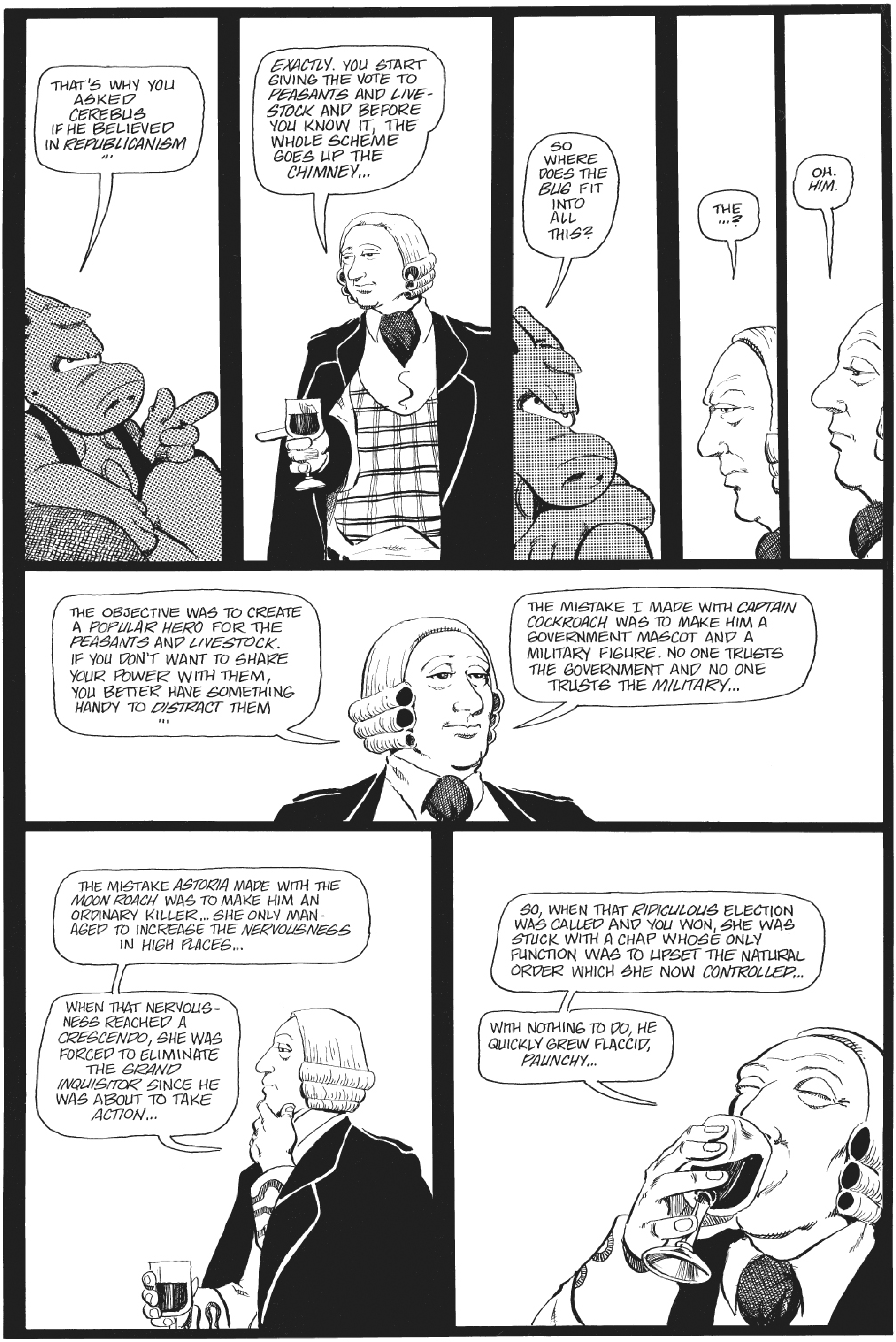

INDEED!
'JUST TALK'. IDLE CHATTER. AIMLESS CONVERSATION...
SO WHAT VIEWPOINT ARE YOU TRYING TO SELL TO OUR LITTLE GREY FRIEND HERE?
I'M NEUTRAL ...
REMEMBER?
OF COURSE. OF COURSE. I DON'T DOUBT IT FOR A MINUTE, MY DEAR...
BUT IF YOU WERE TO GIVE HIM A CARD, WHAT WOULD IT BE?
SCEPTER? GOLD? THE PRIESTESS?
I'D PROBABLY GIVE HIM A PICTURE OF SIR GERRIK
IF YOU WANT TO CHANGE THE SUBJECT, JUST SAY SO...
YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE AGGRESSIVE ABOUT IT
WHO'S SIR GERRIK?
A FRIEND OF ASTORIA'S ...
--SORT OF.

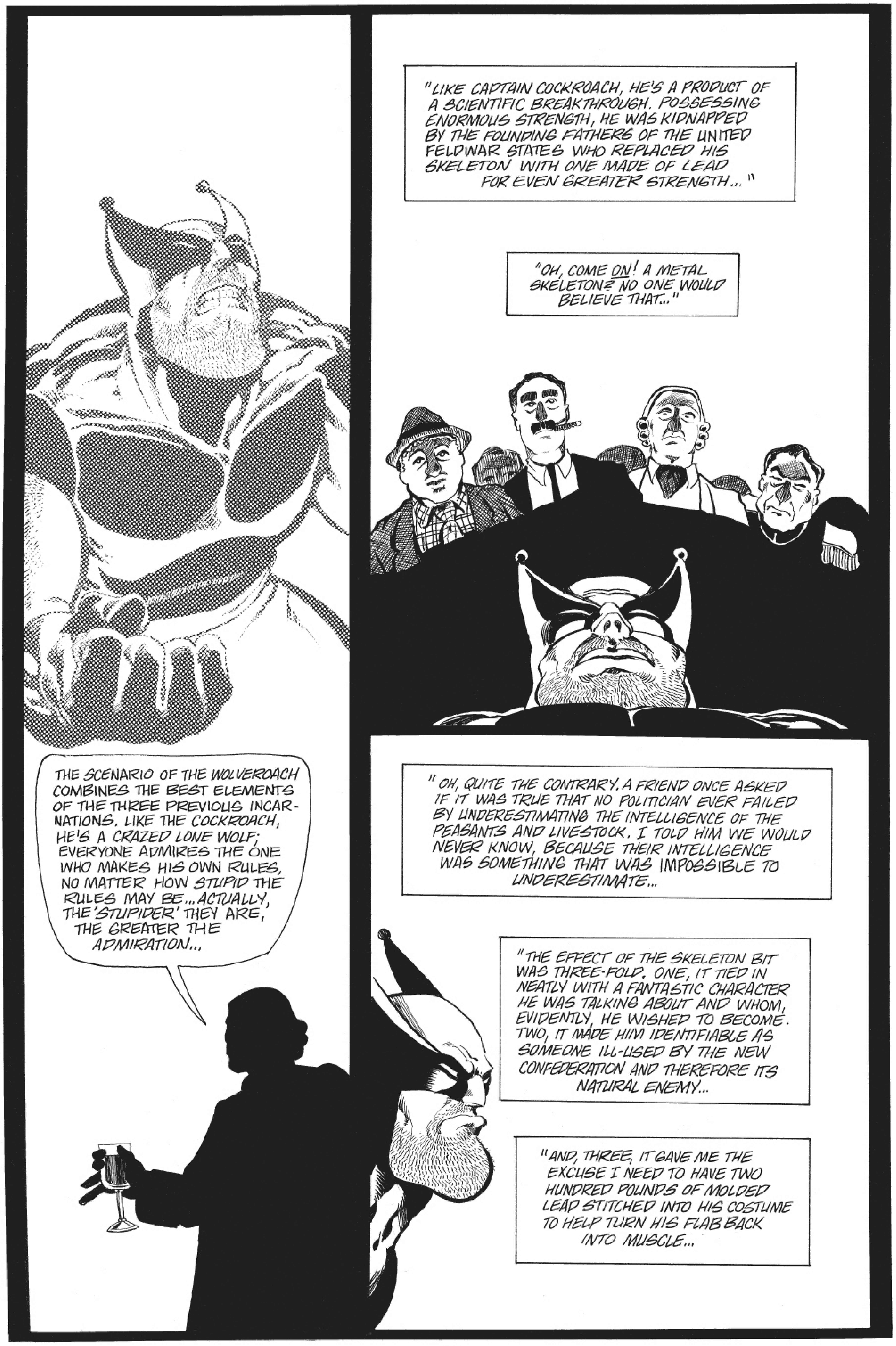

I WOULD HAVE SAID HE WAS A FRIEND OF *YOURS*, AS WELL...
BUT THAT WOULD *DIMINISH* YOUR CLAIMS OF *NEUTRALITY*...
...SOMEWHAT...
WOULD YOU LIKE A *DRINK*?
BRANDY, IF YOU HAVE IT...
PERSONALLY, I'VE NEVER BEEN MUCH FOR *NEUTRALITY*... "*PICK YOUR SIDE AND START SWINGING*," THAT'S *MY* THEORY.
OF COURSE, IN *MY CASE*, I STARTED MY *OWN* SIDE...
HOW *IS* SIR GERRIK? *DANGEROUS* AS USUAL?
JUST MENTIONING HIM SEEMS TO HAVE THE MOST *EXTRAORDINARY* EFFECT ON PEOPLE'S *HEARING*...
I'M *CURIOUS*. DID YOU *REALLY* BELIEVE IN THAT *REPUBLICAN* CLAPTRAP IN *IEST*...?
OR WAS IT ALL ASTORIA'S DOING?
THANK YOU, MY *DEAR*...

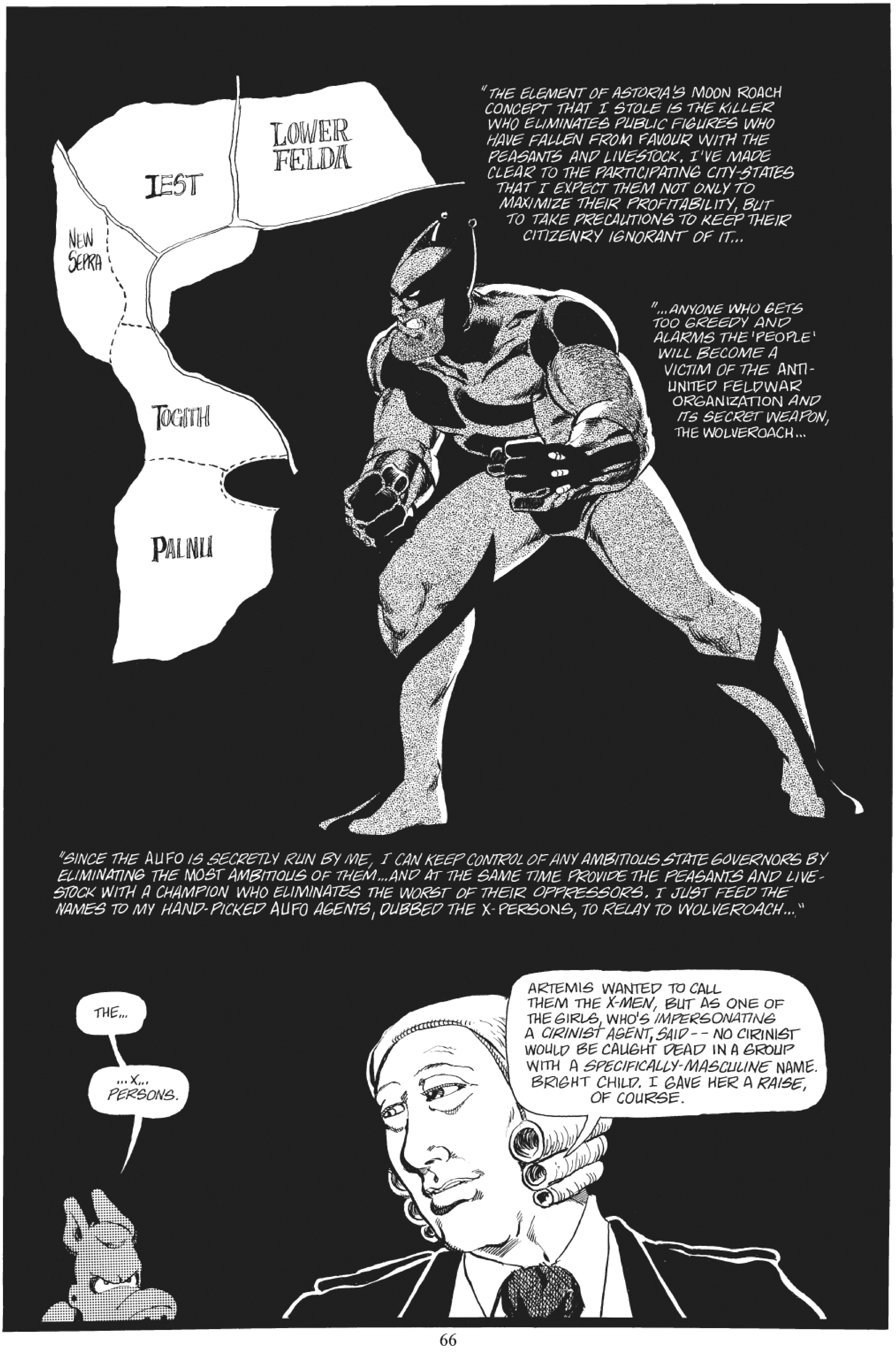

THAT ALL DEPENDS ...
WHAT REPUBLICAN CLAPTRAP ARE YOU REFERRING TO?
ALL OF THIS BUSINESS OF GIVING THE VOTE TO FARMHANDS AND FISH MERCHANTS ...
I MEAN, REALLY!
YOU'RE RIGHT.
CEREBUS THOUGHT IT SHOULD'VE INCLUDED WHORES AND BUMS AS WELL...
... PARDON CEREBUS' LANGUAGE
I'M A BIG GIRL...
I CAN HANDLE IT.
AND WHAT, DARE I ASK, DO YOU SEE AS THE BENEFIT OF ALLOWING "SOILED DOVES" TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ELECTORAL PROCESS?
IT WOULD PUT PRESSURE ON GOVERNMENTS TO BE MORE RESPONSIBLE ABOUT THEIR DEBTS AND LOANS...
CEREBUS HASN'T MET A WHORE, YET, WHO COULD ABIDE GIVING ANYONE CREDIT...
KOFF
ARE YOU SURE THAT YOU DON'T ...
I'M FINE... I'M FINE
I JUST SWALLOWED THE WRONG WAY THAT'S ALL ...

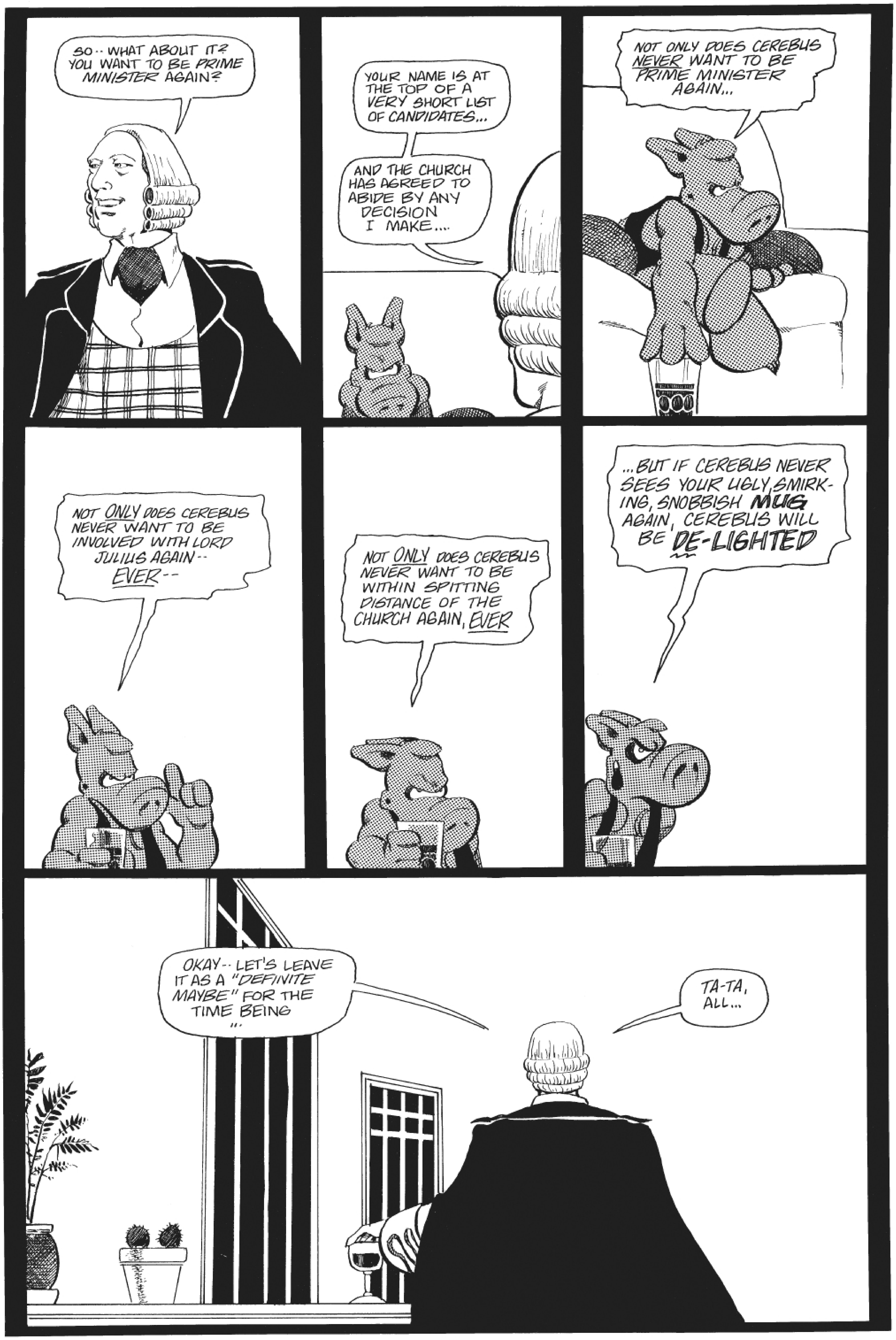

I CAN SEE NOW WHY YOU AND LORD JULIUS GOT ALONG SO FAMOUSLY...
YOU'RE A LOT ALIKE...
WHICH BRINGS ME TO THE POINT OF THIS VISIT ...
HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE PRIME MINISTER OF IEST AGAIN...?
NOT MUCH...
CEREBUS HAS HAD ENOUGH OF ELECTIONS TO LAST HIM A LIFETIME...
WHO SAID ANYTHING ABOUT AN ELECTION?
YOU WANT THE JOB, IT'S YOURS.
I'M READY TO MAKE MY MOVE WITH THE UNITED FELDWAR STATES ...
WHAT? AGAIN?
THIS TIME IS A LITTLE DIFFERENT. I HAVE SIGNED AGREEMENTS ...
...LOWER FELDA...
...NEW SEPRA...
...TOGITH...
...IEST.
MENT
OH, YES ...
AND PALNU.
PALNU?

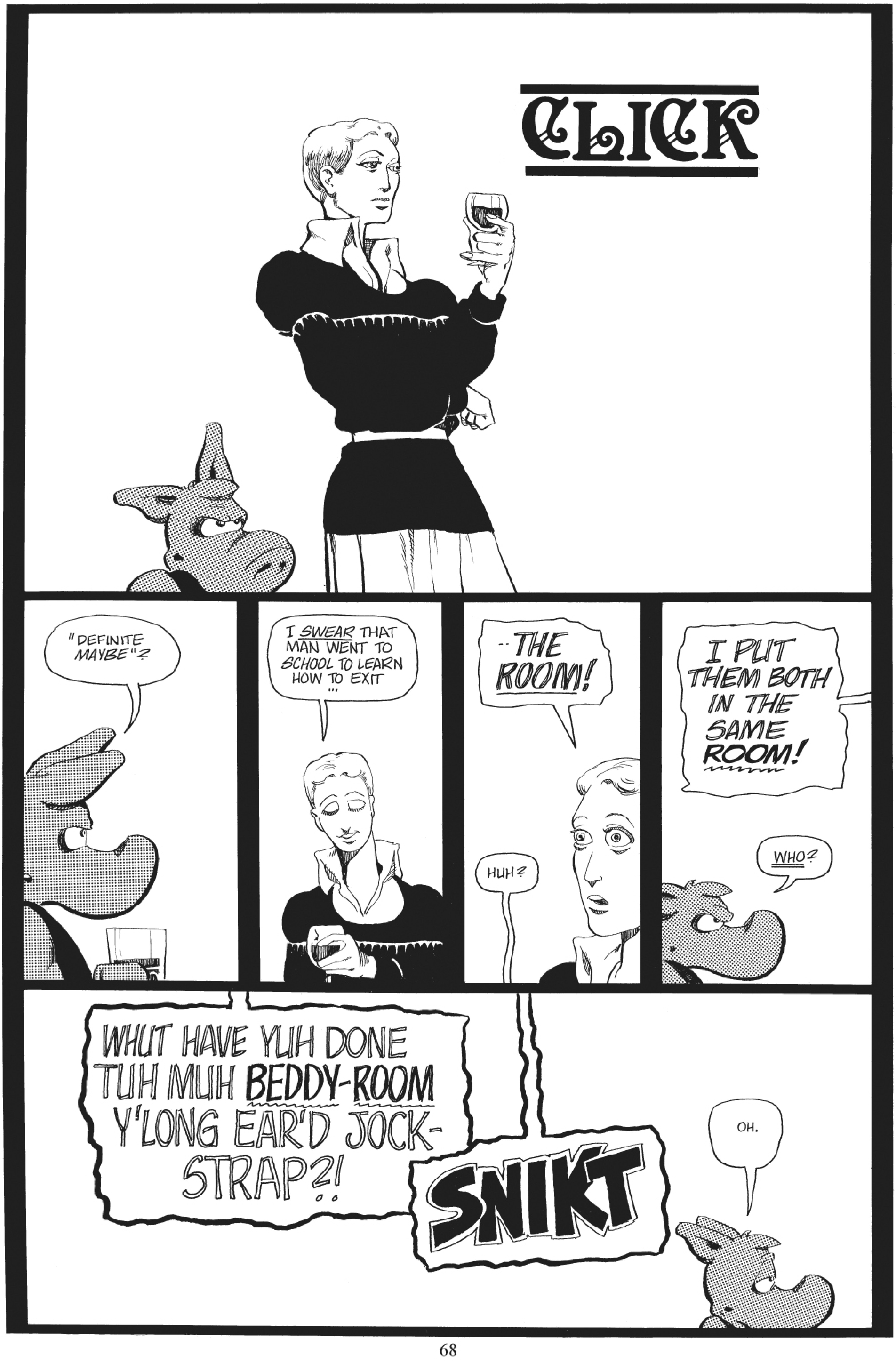

I SAVED THAT LITTLE SURPRISE JUST FOR *YOU*, MY DEAR... I WANTED YOU TO BE THE FIRST TO KNOW...
YOU ARE TOO *KIND*...
ESPECIALLY YOURS.
THEY ALWAYS HAVE THE *AMBIENCE* OF *CHEAP MELODRAMA* ABOUT THEM...
THE *COUNTESS* SIMPLY *ADORES* HEARING ABOUT ALL OF THE *LATEST INTRIGUES*...
YOU'LL FIND, MY *DEAR* -- AS YOU GROW OLDER -- THAT *TRUE MELODRAMA* NEVER COMES CHEAP...
...ASSUMING THAT I EVER GIVE IT A SECOND THOUGHT...
SO YOU FIGURE *LORD JULIUS* WILL MAKE THE DIFFERENCE?...
THE *ENTIRE COALITION* IS WHAT WILL MAKE THE *DIFFERENCE*... LORD JULIUS, THE EASTERN CHURCH, THE MERCHANT CLASS, LAND-OWNERS...
MOST COUNTRIES EXIST BECAUSE OF *ETHNIC DIFFERENCES* OR *GEOGRAPHY*. *OURS* WILL BE DEDICATED TO MAKING US ALL WEALTHY BEYOND OUR WILDEST DREAMS...

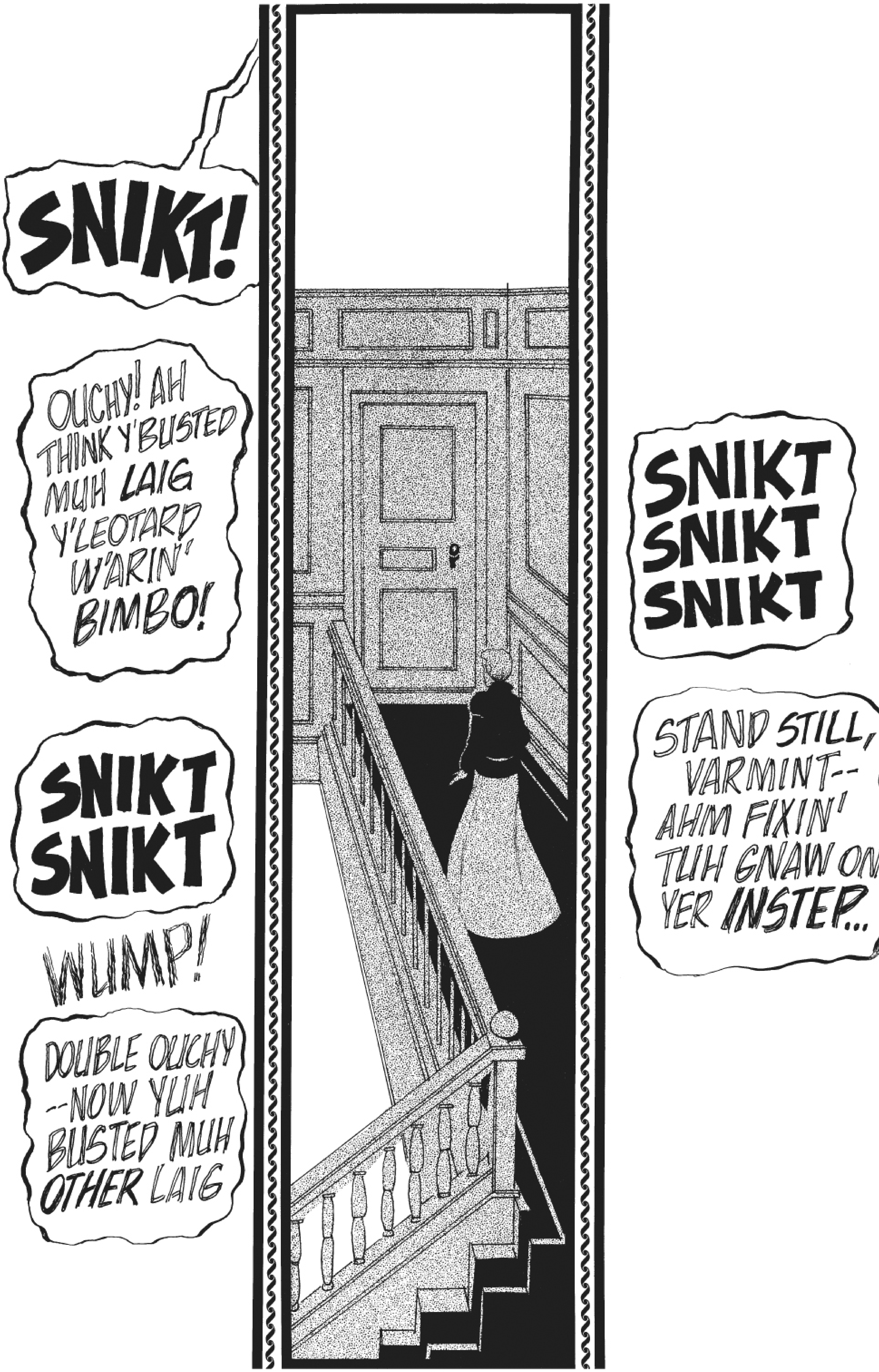

THAT'S WHY YOU ASKED CEREBUS IF HE BELIEVED IN *REPUBLICANISM* ...
EXACTLY. YOU START GIVING THE VOTE TO *PEASANTS* AND *LIVESTOCK* AND BEFORE YOU KNOW IT, THE WHOLE SCHEME GOES UP THE CHIMNEY...
SO WHERE DOES THE *BUG* FIT INTO ALL THIS?
THE ...?
OH. *HIM*.
THE OBJECTIVE WAS TO CREATE A *POPULAR HERO* FOR THE *PEASANTS* AND *LIVESTOCK*. IF YOU DON'T WANT TO SHARE YOUR POWER WITH THEM, YOU BETTER HAVE SOMETHING HANDY TO *DISTRACT* THEM ...
THE MISTAKE I MADE WITH *CAPTAIN COCKROACH* WAS TO MAKE HIM A GOVERNMENT MASCOT AND A MILITARY FIGURE. NO ONE TRUSTS THE GOVERNMENT AND NO ONE TRUSTS THE *MILITARY*...
THE MISTAKE *ASTORIA* MADE WITH THE *MOON ROACH* WAS TO MAKE HIM AN ORDINARY KILLER... SHE ONLY MANAGED TO INCREASE THE *NERVOUSNESS* IN HIGH PLACES...
WHEN THAT NERVOUSNESS REACHED A *CRESCENDO*, SHE WAS FORCED TO ELIMINATE THE *GRAND INQUISITOR* SINCE HE WAS ABOUT TO TAKE *ACTION*...
SO, WHEN THAT *RIDICULOUS* ELECTION WAS CALLED AND YOU WON, SHE WAS STUCK WITH A CHAP WHOSE ONLY FUNCTION WAS TO UPSET THE NATURAL ORDER WHICH SHE NOW *CONTROLLED*...
WITH NOTHING TO DO, HE QUICKLY GREW FLACCID, *PAUNCHY*...


THE SCENARIO OF THE WOLVEROACH COMBINES THE BEST ELEMENTS OF THE THREE PREVIOUS INCARNATIONS. LIKE THE COCKROACH, HE'S A CRAZED LONE WOLF; EVERYONE ADMIRES THE ONE WHO MAKES HIS OWN RULES, NO MATTER HOW STUPID THE RULES MAY BE...ACTUALLY, THE 'STUPIDER' THEY ARE, THE GREATER THE ADMIRATION...
"LIKE CAPTAIN COCKROACH, HE'S A PRODUCT OF A SCIENTIFIC BREAKTHROUGH. POSSESSING ENORMOUS STRENGTH, HE WAS KIDNAPPED BY THE FOUNDING FATHERS OF THE UNITED FELDWAR STATES WHO REPLACED HIS SKELETON WITH ONE MADE OF LEAD FOR EVEN GREATER STRENGTH..."
"OH, COME ON! A METAL SKELETON? NO ONE WOULD BELIEVE THAT..."
"OH, QUITE THE CONTRARY. A FRIEND ONCE ASKED IF IT WAS TRUE THAT NO POLITICIAN EVER FAILED BY UNDERESTIMATING THE INTELLIGENCE OF THE PEASANTS AND LIVESTOCK. I TOLD HIM WE WOULD NEVER KNOW, BECAUSE THEIR INTELLIGENCE WAS SOMETHING THAT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO UNDERESTIMATE...
"THE EFFECT OF THE SKELETON BIT WAS THREE-FOLD. ONE, IT TIED IN NEATLY WITH A FANTASTIC CHARACTER HE WAS TALKING ABOUT AND WHOM, EVIDENTLY, HE WISHED TO BECOME. TWO, IT MADE HIM IDENTIFIABLE AS SOMEONE ILL-USED BY THE NEW CONFEDERATION AND THEREFORE ITS NATURAL ENEMY...
"AND, THREE, IT GAVE ME THE EXCUSE I NEED TO HAVE TWO HUNDRED POUNDS OF MOLDED LEAD STITCHED INTO HIS COSTUME TO HELP TURN HIS FLAB BACK INTO MUSCLE...


LOWER FELDA
IEST
NEW SEPRA
TOGITH
PALNU
"THE ELEMENT OF ASTORIA'S MOON ROACH CONCEPT THAT I STOLE IS THE KILLER WHO ELIMINATES PUBLIC FIGURES WHO HAVE FALLEN FROM FAVOUR WITH THE PEASANTS AND LIVESTOCK. I'VE MADE CLEAR TO THE PARTICIPATING CITY-STATES THAT I EXPECT THEM NOT ONLY TO MAXIMIZE THEIR PROFITABILITY, BUT TO TAKE PRECAUTIONS TO KEEP THEIR CITIZENRY IGNORANT OF IT...
"...ANYONE WHO GETS TOO GREEDY AND ALARMS THE 'PEOPLE' WILL BECOME A VICTIM OF THE ANTI-UNITED FELDWAR ORGANIZATION AND ITS SECRET WEAPON, THE WOLVEROACH...
"SINCE THE AUFO IS SECRETLY RUN BY ME, I CAN KEEP CONTROL OF ANY AMBITIOUS STATE GOVERNORS BY ELIMINATING THE MOST AMBITIOUS OF THEM...AND AT THE SAME TIME PROVIDE THE PEASANTS AND LIVESTOCK WITH A CHAMPION WHO ELIMINATES THE WORST OF THEIR OPPRESSORS. I JUST FEED THE NAMES TO MY HAND-PICKED AUFO AGENTS, DUBBED THE X-PERSONS, TO RELAY TO WOLVEROACH..."
THE...
...X... PERSONS.
ARTEMIS WANTED TO CALL THEM THE X-MEN, BUT AS ONE OF THE GIRLS, WHO'S IMPERSONATING A CIRINIST AGENT, SAID -- NO CIRINIST WOULD BE CAUGHT DEAD IN A GROUP WITH A SPECIFICALLY-MASCULINE NAME. BRIGHT CHILD. I GAVE HER A RAISE, OF COURSE.


SO·· WHAT ABOUT IT? YOU WANT TO BE PRIME MINISTER AGAIN?
YOUR NAME IS AT THE TOP OF A VERY SHORT LIST OF CANDIDATES...
AND THE CHURCH HAS AGREED TO ABIDE BY ANY DECISION I MAKE....
NOT ONLY DOES CEREBUS NEVER WANT TO BE PRIME MINISTER AGAIN...
NOT ONLY DOES CEREBUS NEVER WANT TO BE INVOLVED WITH LORD JULIUS AGAIN·· EVER--
NOT ONLY DOES CEREBUS NEVER WANT TO BE WITHIN SPITTING DISTANCE OF THE CHURCH AGAIN, EVER
...BUT IF CEREBUS NEVER SEES YOUR UGLY, SMIRKING, SNOBBISH MUG AGAIN, CEREBUS WILL BE DE-LIGHTED
OKAY·· LET'S LEAVE IT AS A "DEFINITE MAYBE" FOR THE TIME BEING ...
TA-TA, ALL...

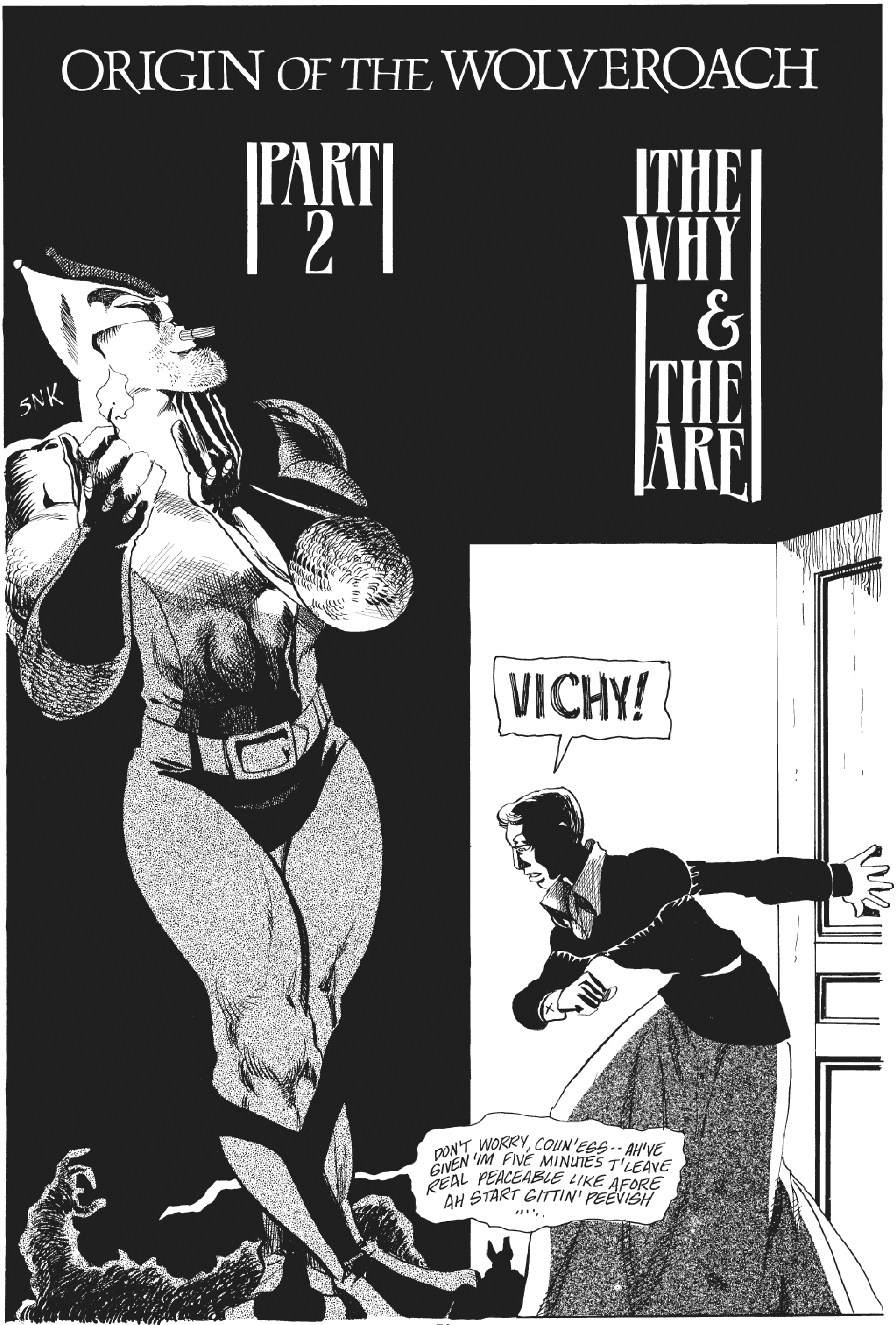

CLICK
"DEFINITE MAYBE"?
I SWEAR THAT MAN WENT TO SCHOOL TO LEARN HOW TO EXIT ...
..THE ROOM!
HUH?
I PUT THEM BOTH IN THE SAME ROOM!
WHO?
WHUT HAVE YUH DONE TUH MUH BEDDY-ROOM Y'LONG EAR'D JOCK-STRAP?!
SNIKT
OH.

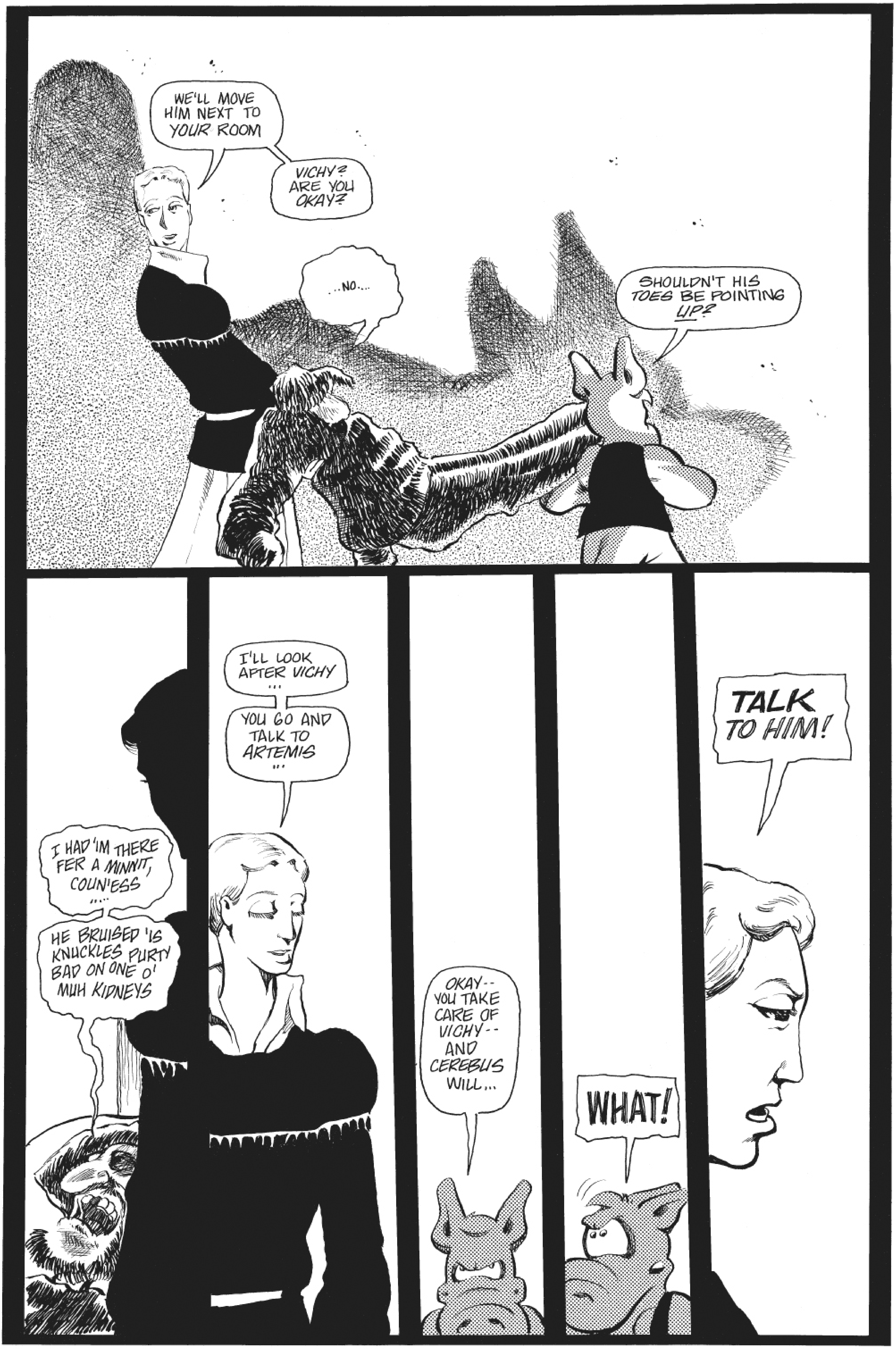

SNIKT!
OUCHY! AH THINK Y'BUSTED MUH LAIG Y'LEOTARD W'ARIN' BIMBO!
SNIKT SNIKT
WUMP!
DOUBLE OUCHY --NOW YUH BUSTED MUH OTHER LAIG
SNIKT SNIKT SNIKT
STAND STILL, VARMINT-- AHM FIXIN' TUH GNAW ON YER INSTEP...

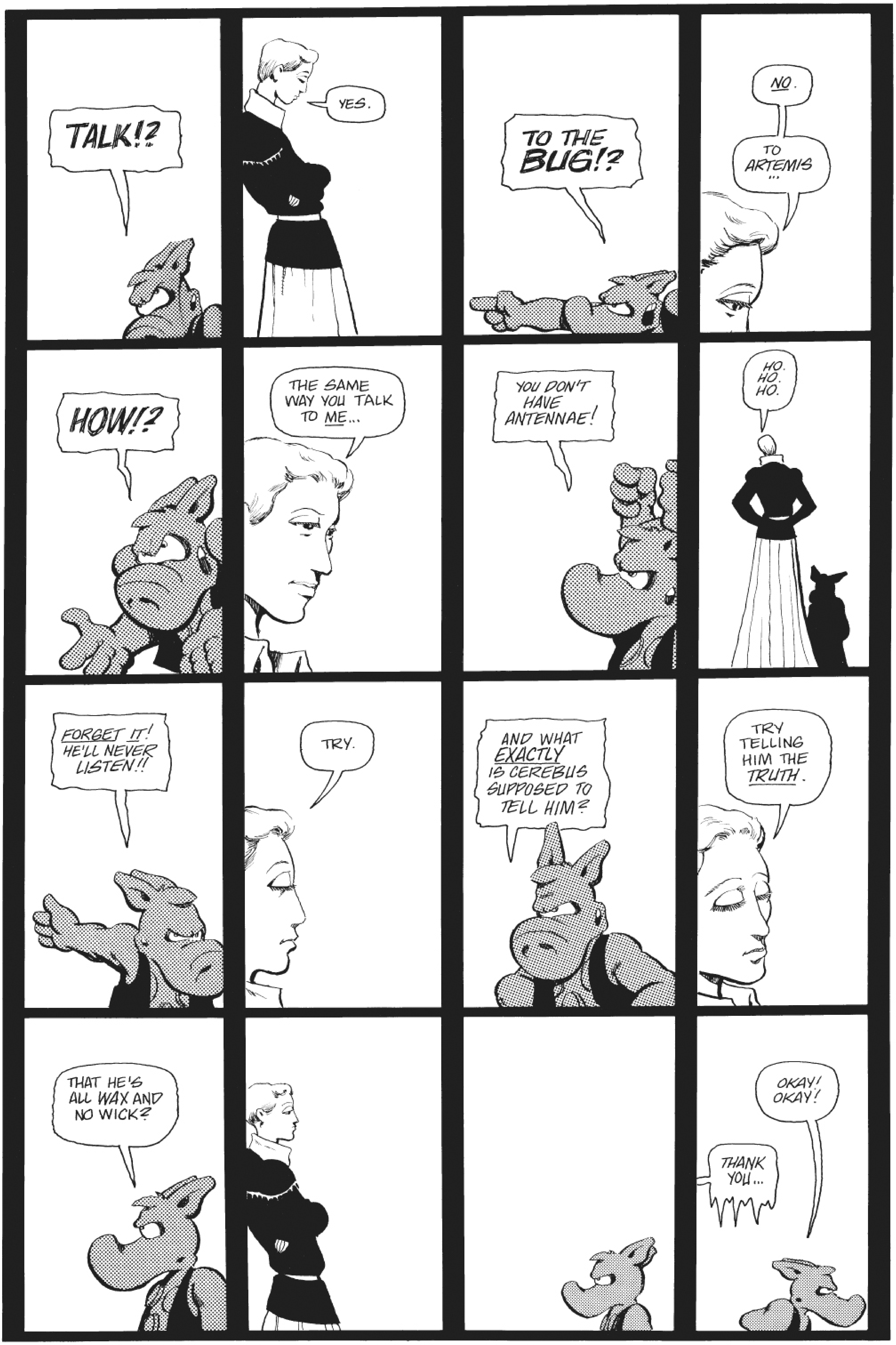
ORIGIN OF THE WOLVEROACH

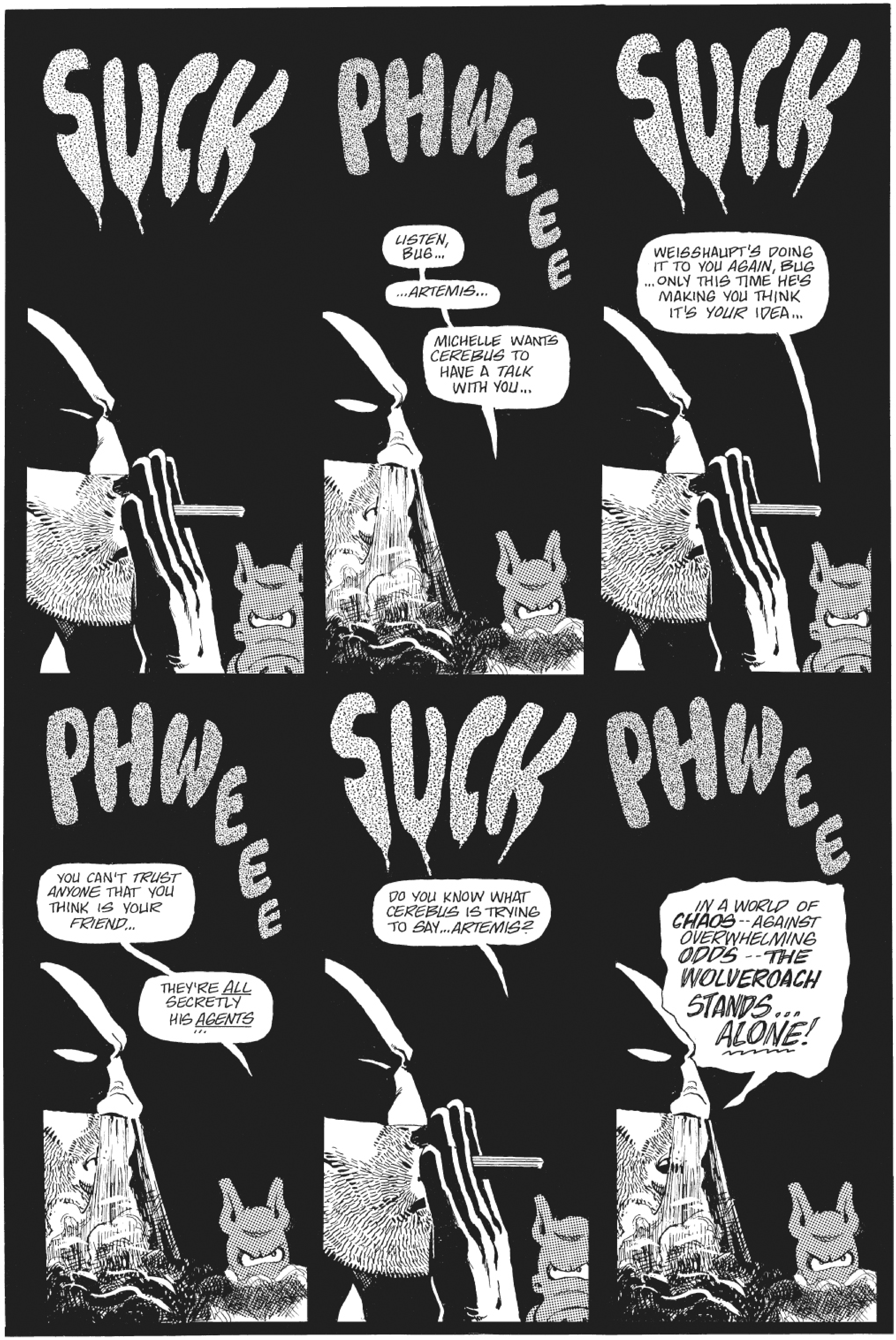
PART 2

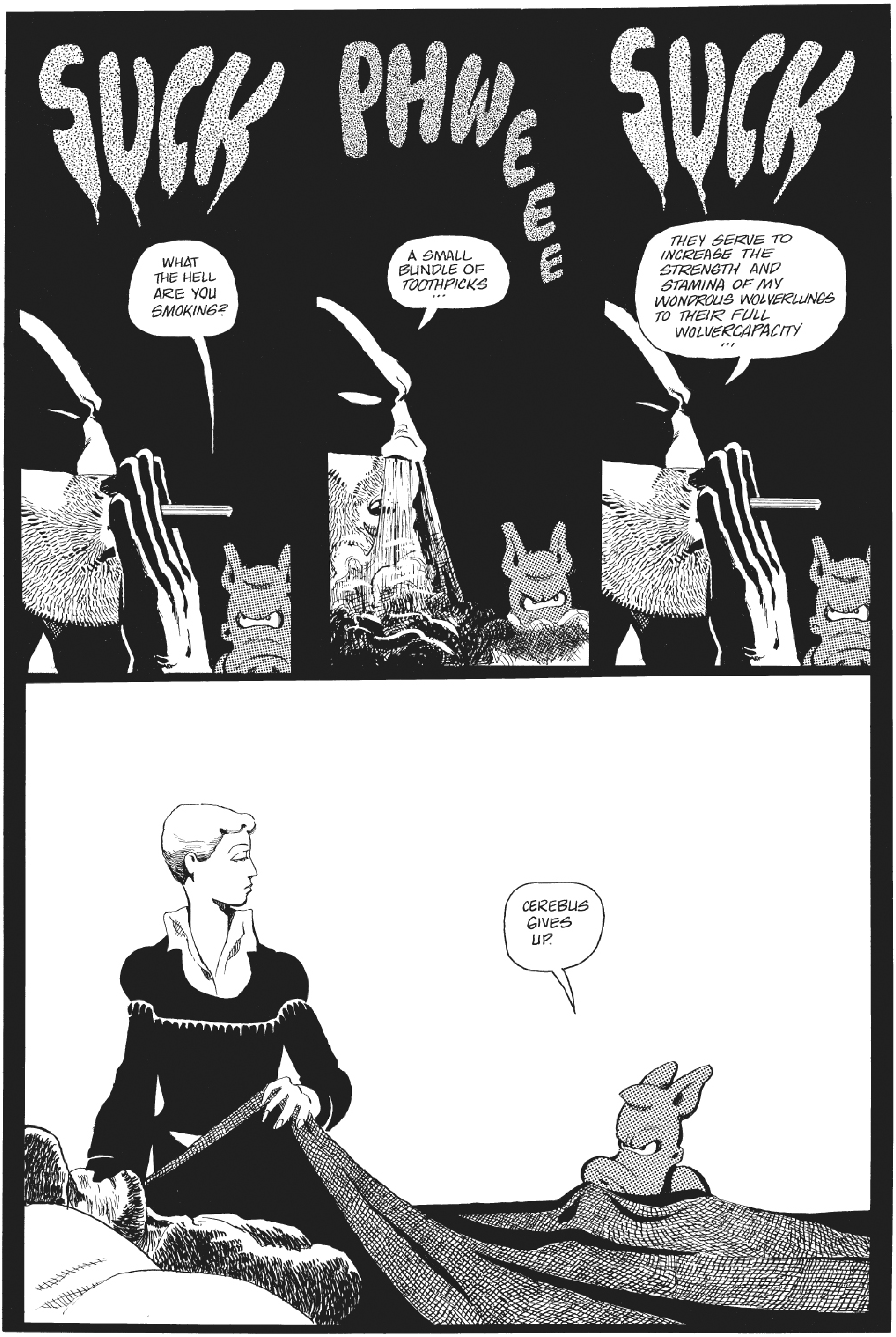
THE WHY & THE ARE

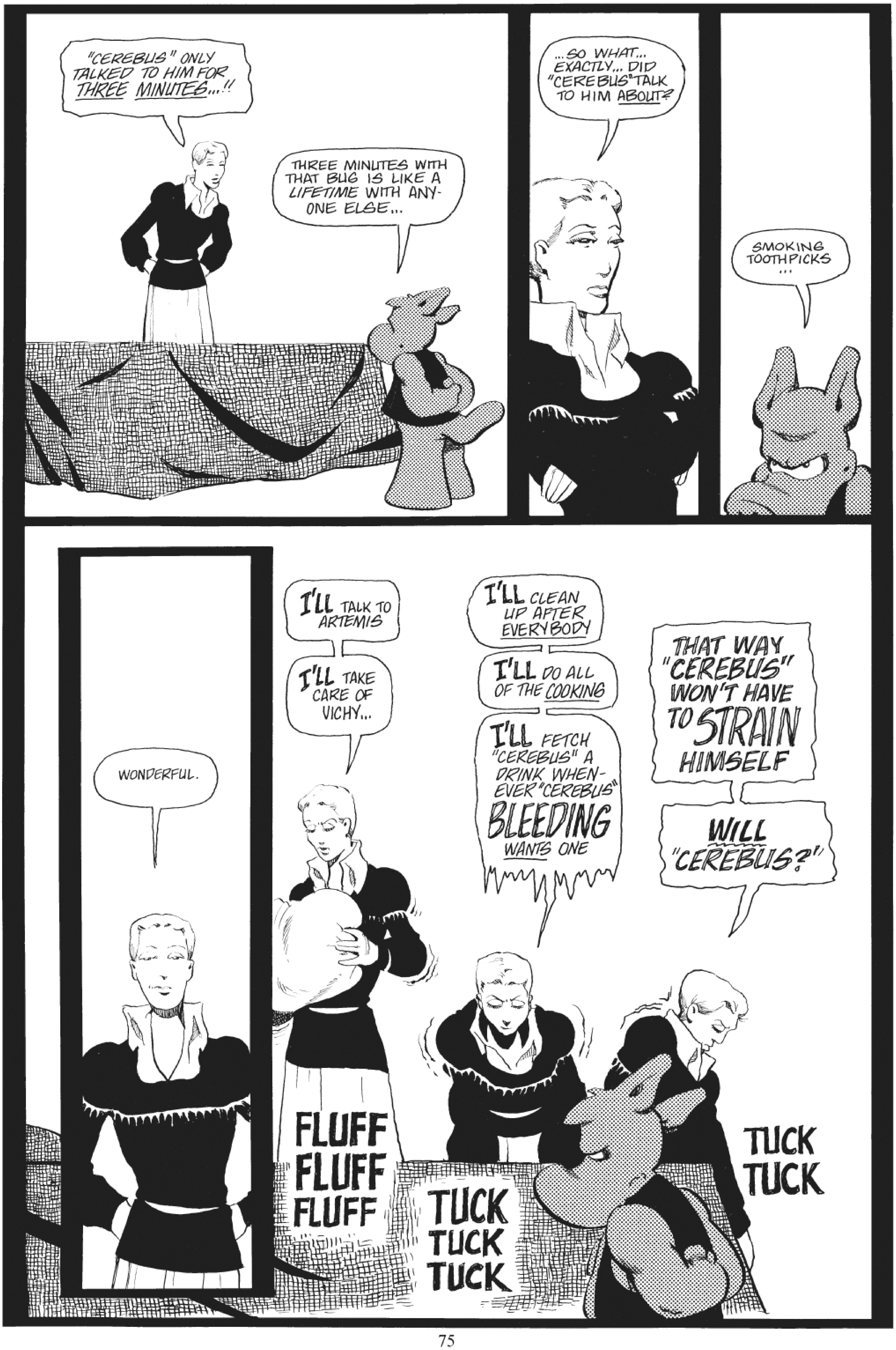

SNK
VICHY!
DON'T WORRY, COUN'ESS-- AH'VE GIVEN 'IM FIVE MINUTES T'LEAVE REAL PEACEABLE LIKE AFORE AH START GITTIN' PEEVISH ...

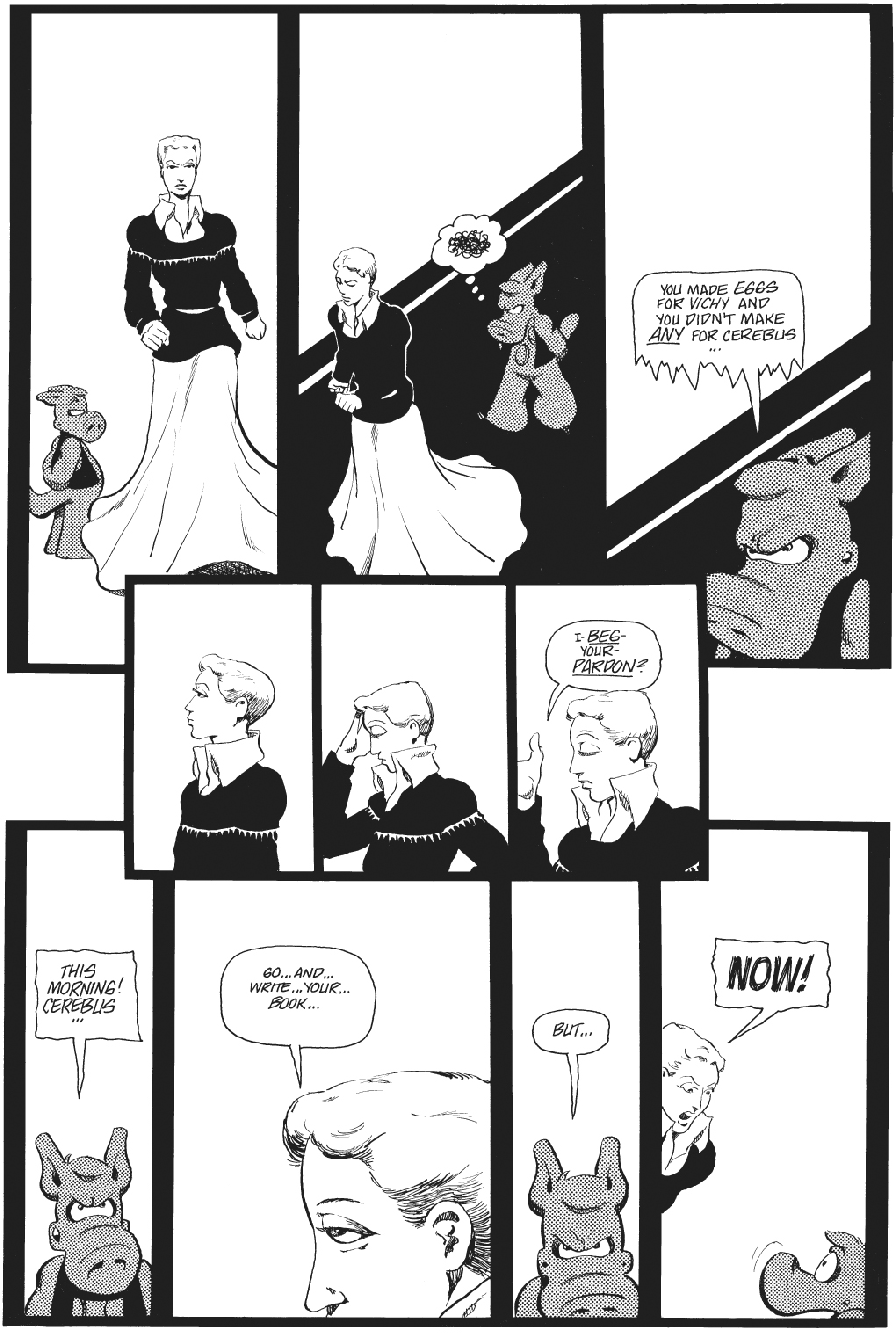

WE'LL MOVE HIM NEXT TO YOUR ROOM
VICHY? ARE YOU OKAY?
...NO...
SHOULDN'T HIS TOES BE POINTING UP?
I HAD 'IM THERE FER A MINNIT, COUN'ESS ....
HE BRUISED 'IS KNUCKLES PURTY BAD ON ONE O' MUH KIDNEYS
I'LL LOOK AFTER VICHY ...
YOU GO AND TALK TO ARTEMIS ...
OKAY-- YOU TAKE CARE OF VICHY-- AND CEREBUS WILL...
WHAT!
TALK TO HIM!

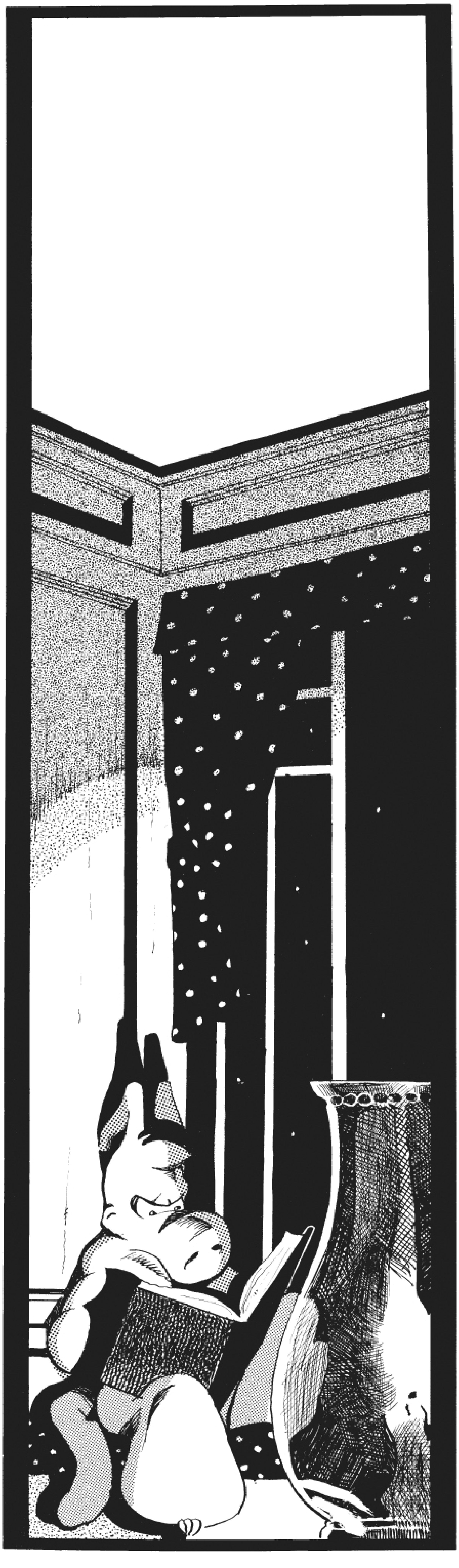

TALK!?
YES.
TO THE BUG!?
NO.
TO ARTEMIS ...
HOW!?
THE SAME WAY YOU TALK TO ME...
YOU DON'T HAVE ANTENNAE!
HO. HO. HO.
FORGET IT! HE'LL NEVER LISTEN!!
TRY.
AND WHAT EXACTLY IS CEREBUS SUPPOSED TO TELL HIM?
TRY TELLING HIM THE TRUTH.
THAT HE'S ALL WAX AND NO WICK?
OKAY! OKAY!
THANK YOU...


SUCK
PHWEEE
LISTEN, BUG...
...ARTEMIS...
MICHELLE WANTS CEREBUS TO HAVE A TALK WITH YOU...
SUCK
WEISSHAUPT'S DOING IT TO YOU AGAIN, BUG ...ONLY THIS TIME HE'S MAKING YOU THINK IT'S YOUR IDEA...
PHWEEE
YOU CAN'T TRUST ANYONE THAT YOU THINK IS YOUR FRIEND...
THEY'RE ALL SECRETLY HIS AGENTS...
SUCK
DO YOU KNOW WHAT CEREBUS IS TRYING TO SAY...ARTEMIS?
PHWEE
IN A WORLD OF CHAOS--AGAINST OVERWHELMING ODDS--THE WOLVEROACH STANDS... ALONE!


SUCK
PHWEEE
SUCK
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU SMOKING?
A SMALL BUNDLE OF TOOTHPICKS ...
THEY SERVE TO INCREASE THE STRENGTH AND STAMINA OF MY WONDROUS WOLVERLUNGS TO THEIR FULL WOLVERCAPACITY ...
CEREBUS GIVES UP.


"CEREBUS" ONLY TALKED TO HIM FOR THREE MINUTES...!!
THREE MINUTES WITH THAT BUG IS LIKE A LIFETIME WITH ANYONE ELSE...
...SO WHAT... EXACTLY... DID "CEREBUS" TALK TO HIM ABOUT?
SMOKING TOOTHPICKS ...
WONDERFUL.
I'LL TALK TO ARTEMIS
I'LL TAKE CARE OF VICHY...
I'LL CLEAN UP AFTER EVERYBODY
I'LL DO ALL OF THE COOKING
I'LL FETCH "CEREBUS" A DRINK WHENEVER "CEREBUS" BLEEDING WANTS ONE
THAT WAY "CEREBUS" WON'T HAVE TO STRAIN HIMSELF
WILL "CEREBUS?"
FLUFF FLUFF FLUFF
TUCK TUCK TUCK
TUCK TUCK


YOU MADE EGGS FOR VICHY AND YOU DIDN'T MAKE ANY FOR CEREBUS ...
I- BEG- YOUR- PARDON?
THIS MORNING! CEREBUS ...
GO... AND... WRITE... YOUR... BOOK...
BUT...
NOW!



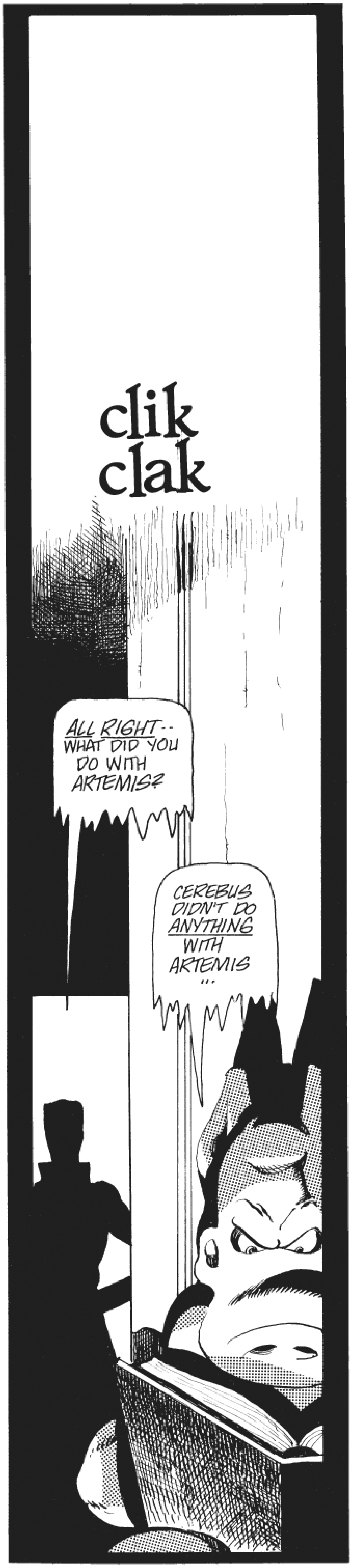
"On Governing" PART the FOURTH

by Cerebus, former Prime Minister of Iest

Power

Power is a very strange thing. When you are Prime Minister, no one can say "no" to you or you have them executed. But there are different ways of saying "no". You can tell Cerebus you are "studying the matter." or that you are "encountering problems." If you are told to do it Cerebus' way, you'll go away grumbling and you won't do a good job because you want to prove Cerebus was wrong to tell you to do it that way. So Cerebus has the choice of getting a job done right your way, or done wrong Cerebus' way. The longer Cerebus went through this crap, the more he realized why Lord Julius runs Palnu the way he does. No one listens anyway, so why try to make sense? An aide came in and said "The Abbess is revolting." Cerebus waggled his eyebrows and said "I'll say she is," and he went away.

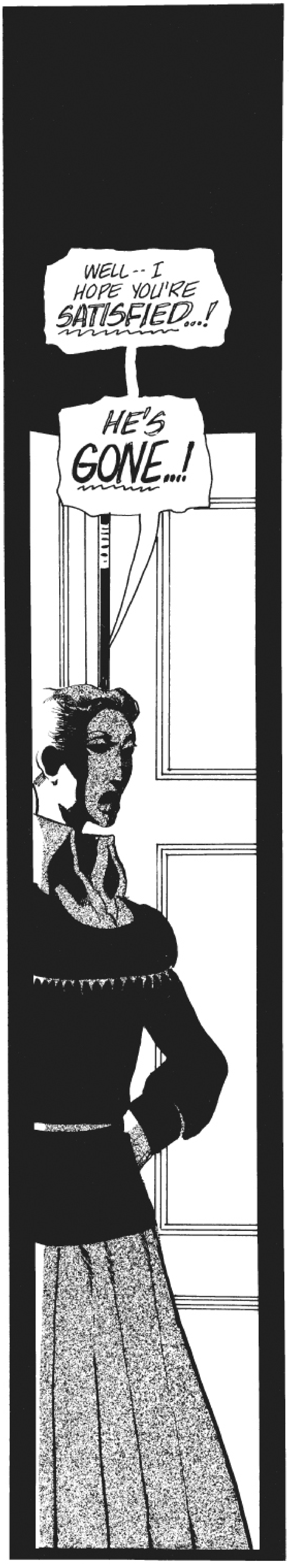
That was when Cerebus realized that he was not going to last very long as Prime Minister if he didn't start drinking more...

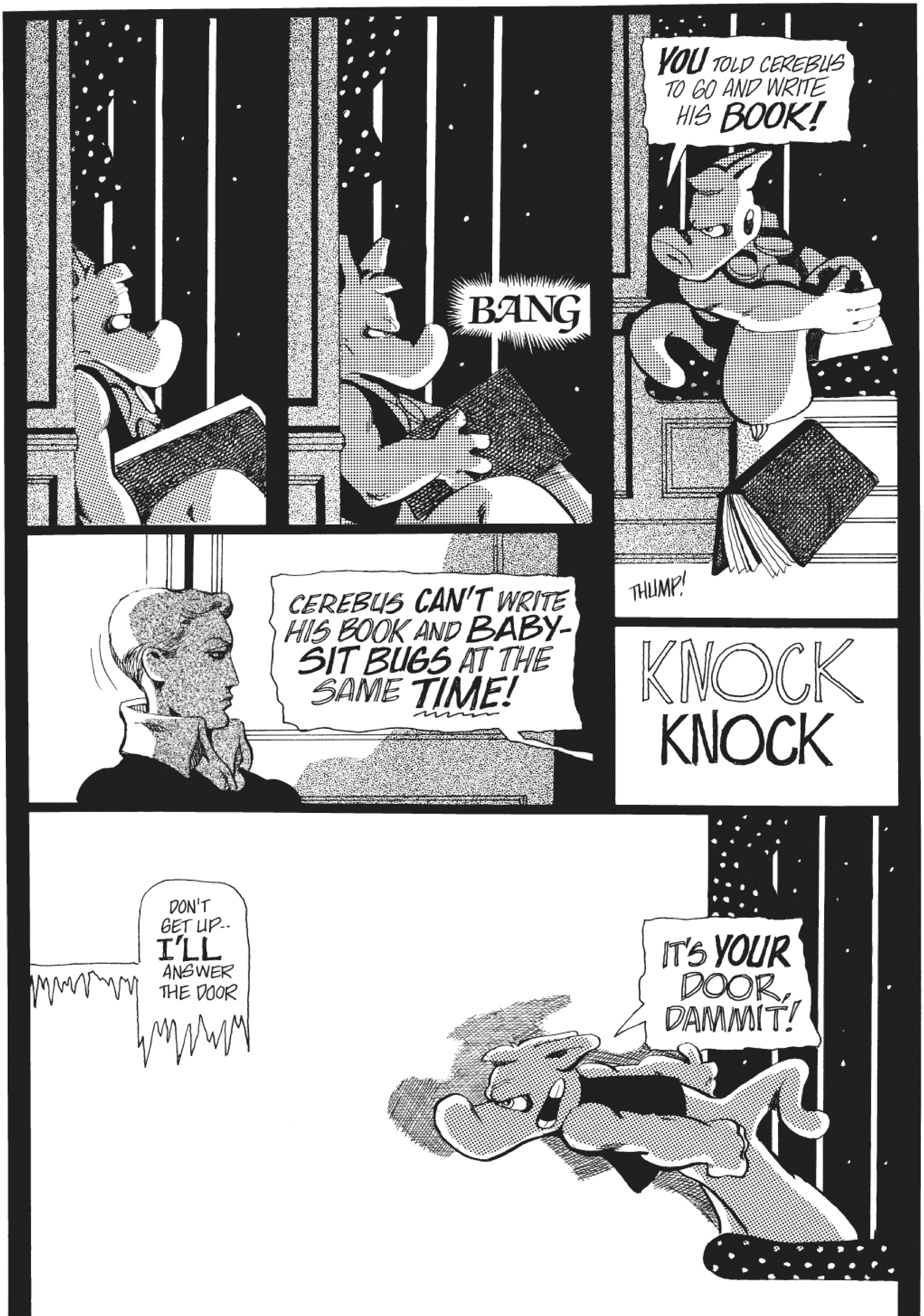

clik
clak
ALL RIGHT-- WHAT DID YOU DO WITH ARTEMIS?
CEREBUS DIDN'T DO ANYTHING WITH ARTEMIS ...

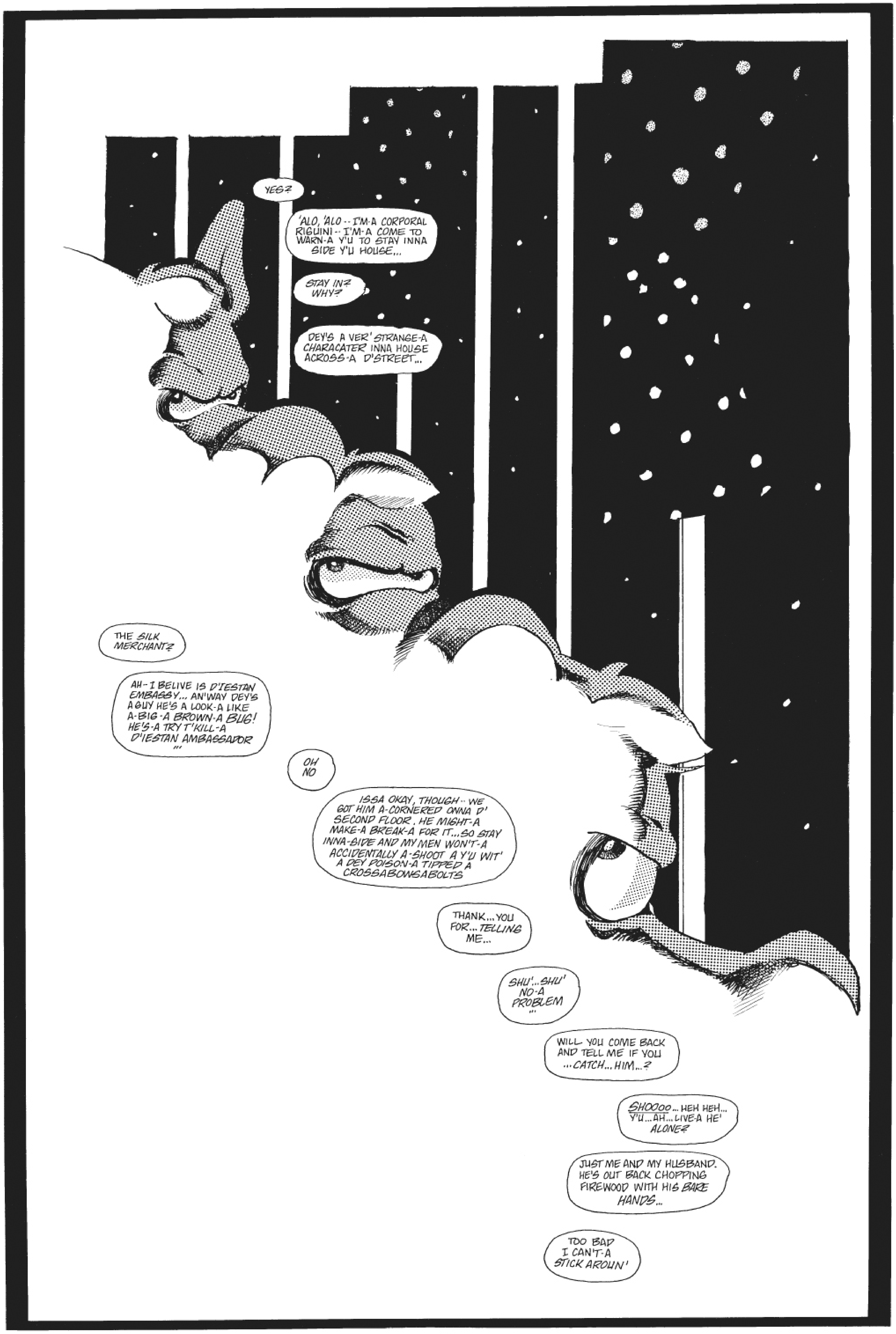
slam

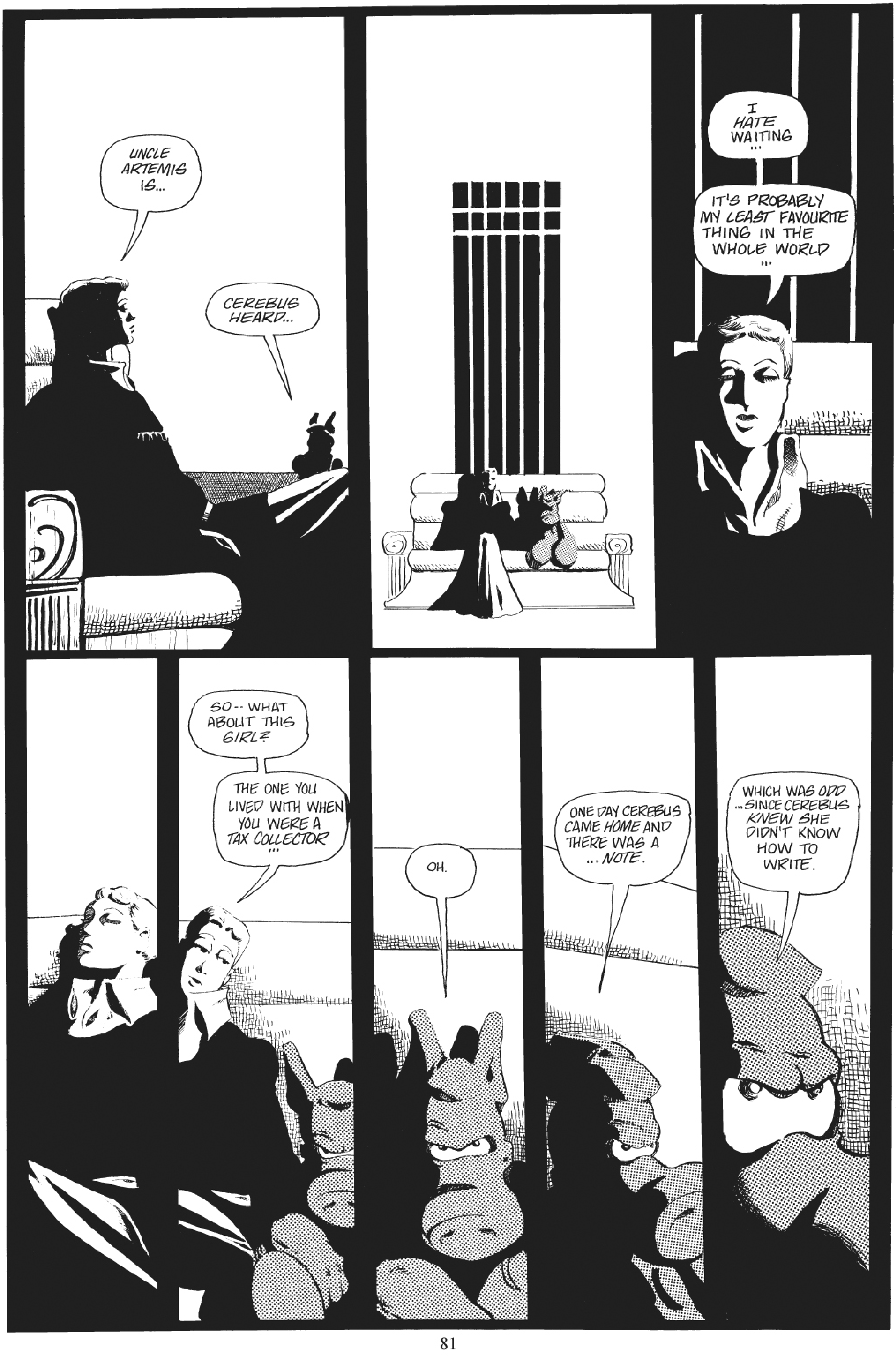
If no one is screaming at you, you are making good decisions. If you start making bad decisions, the only thing you can do is drink. You just keep making decisions and drinking, making decisions and drinking. Finally someone else takes care of it. But be sure to have some hot towels, raw eggs and a Blacksmith's vice handy for the next morning. If you are going to yell at people yourself, save it for when you have a hangover. You just keep yelling louder and louder and your head hurts more and more and finally you can't take it anymore, so you hurl yourself across your desk and land on the wimp's chest and pound him in the head until he dies. This is always a great tension reducer. It was Cerebus' cleaning lady who pointed out that you should always do this on tile, as the stains on the carpet are very hard to remove.

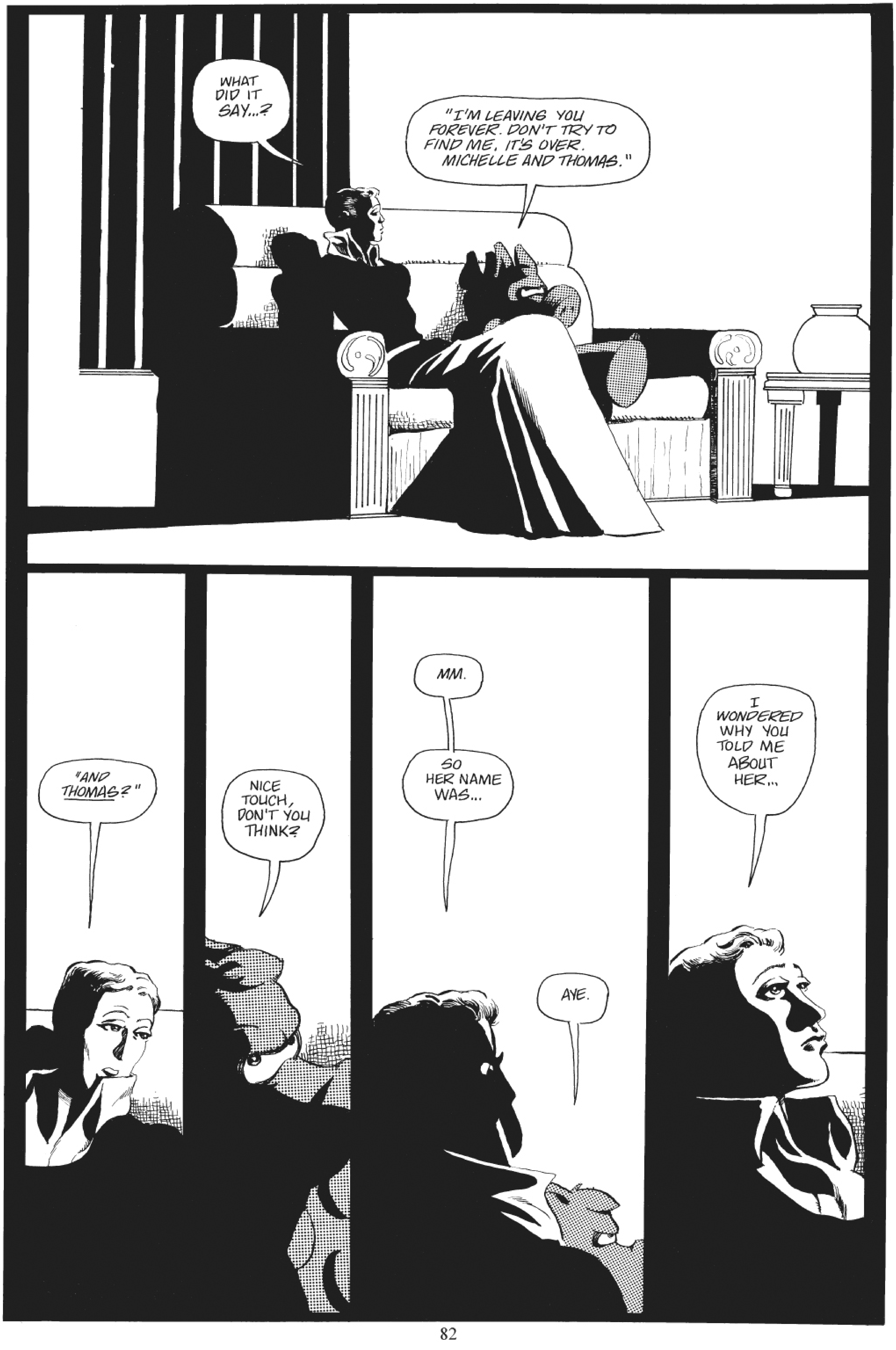
CLIK
CLAK

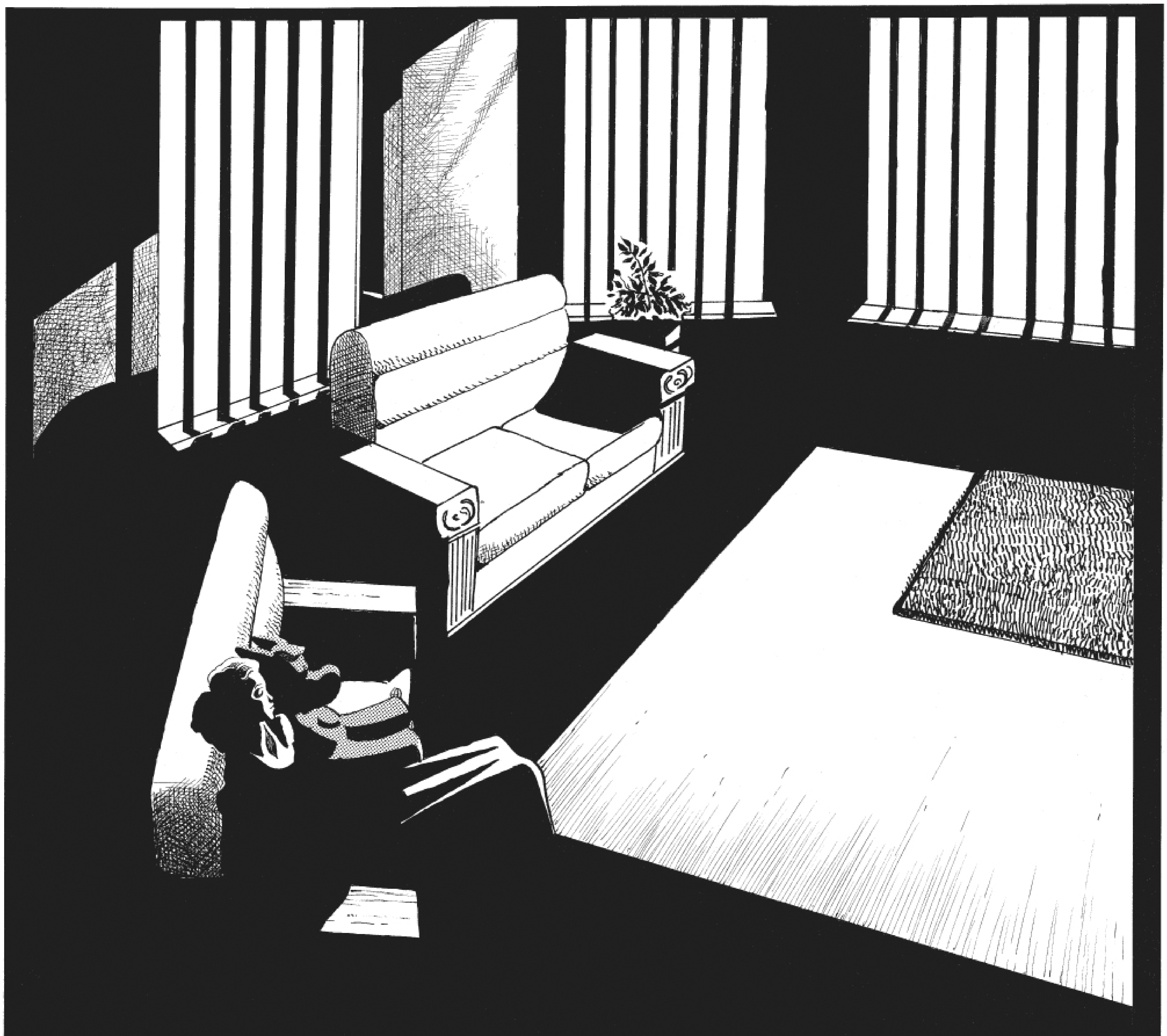

WELL -- I HOPE YOU'RE SATISFIED...!
HE'S GONE...!

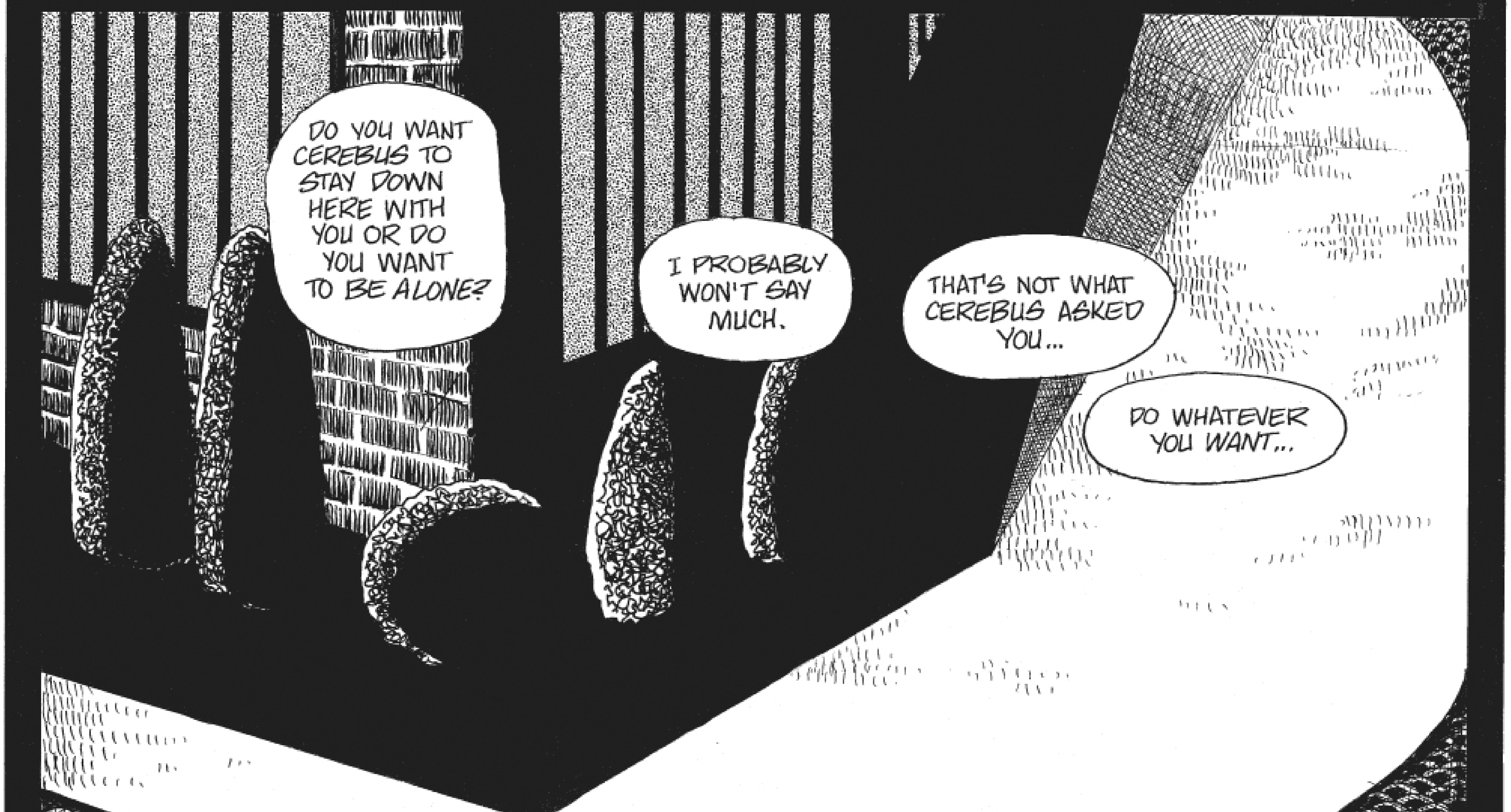

BANG
YOU TOLD CEREBUS TO GO AND WRITE HIS BOOK!
THUMP!
CEREBUS CAN'T WRITE HIS BOOK AND BABY-SIT BUGS AT THE SAME TIME!
KNOCK KNOCK
DON'T GET UP-- I'LL ANSWER THE DOOR
IT'S YOUR DOOR, DAMMIT!

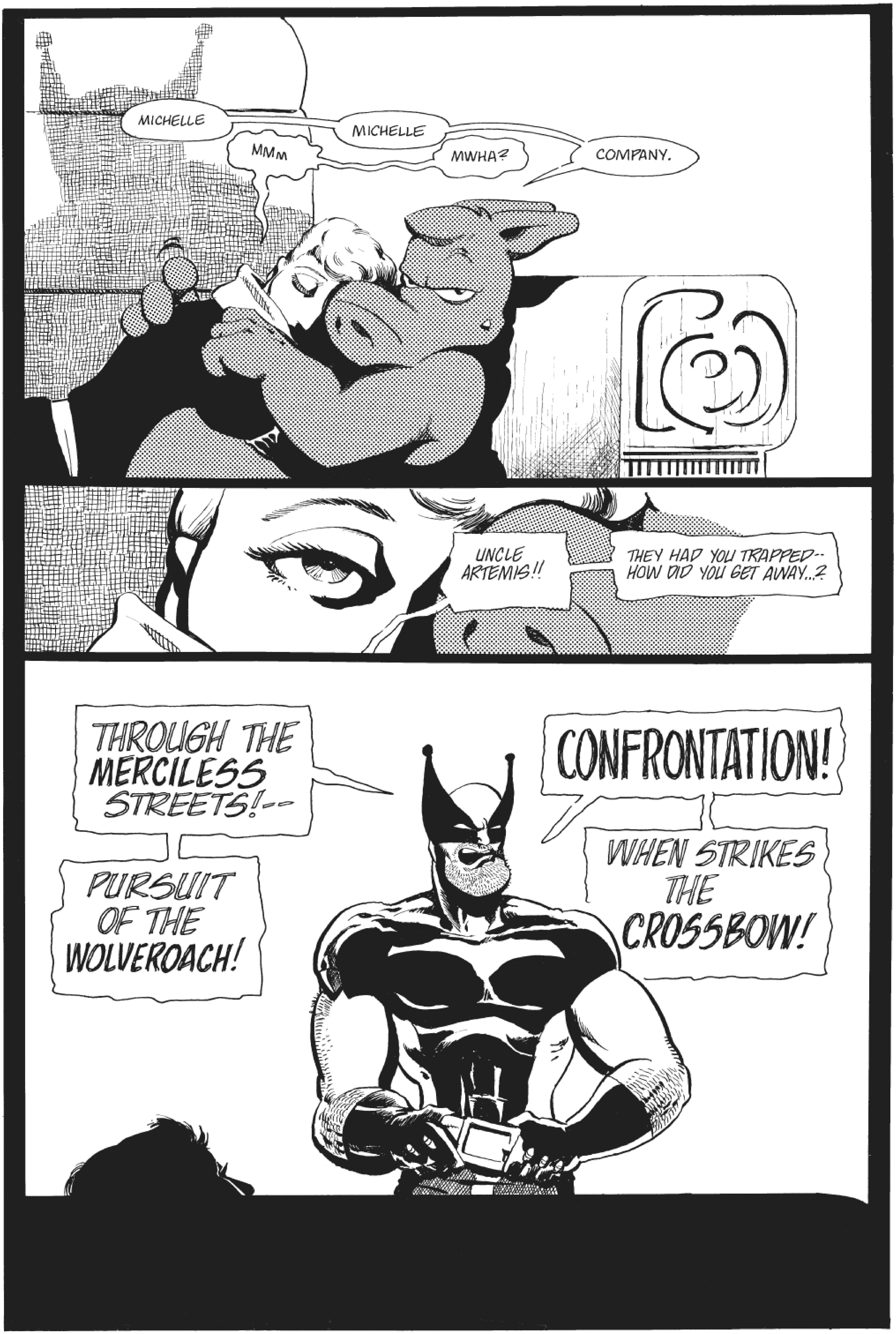

YES?
'ALO, 'ALO -- I'M-A CORPORAL RIGUINI -- I'M-A COME TO WARN-A Y'U TO STAY INNA SIDE Y'U HOUSE...
STAY IN? WHY?
DEY'S A VER' STRANGE-A CHARACATER INNA HOUSE ACROSS-A D'STREET...
THE SILK MERCHANT?
AH-- I BELIVE IS D'IESTAN EMBASSY... AN'WAY DEY'S A GUY HE'S A LOOK-A LIKE A-BIG-A BROWN-A BUG! HE'S-A TRY T'KILL-A D'IESTAN AMBASSADOR ...
OH NO
ISSA OKAY, THOUGH -- WE GOT HIM A-CORNERED ONNA D' SECOND FLOOR. HE MIGHT-A MAKE-A BREAK-A FOR IT... SO STAY INNA-SIDE AND MY MEN WON'T-A ACCIDENTALLY A-SHOOT A Y'U WIT' A DEY POISON-A TIPPED A CROSSABOWSABOLTS
THANK... YOU FOR... TELLING ME...
SHU'... SHU' NO-A PROBLEM ...
WILL YOU COME BACK AND TELL ME IF YOU ...CATCH... HIM...?
SHOOOO... HEH HEH... Y'U... AH... LIVE-A HE' ALONE?
JUST ME AND MY HUSBAND. HE'S OUT BACK CHOPPING FIREWOOD WITH HIS BARE HANDS...
TOO BAD I CAN'T-A STICK AROUN'

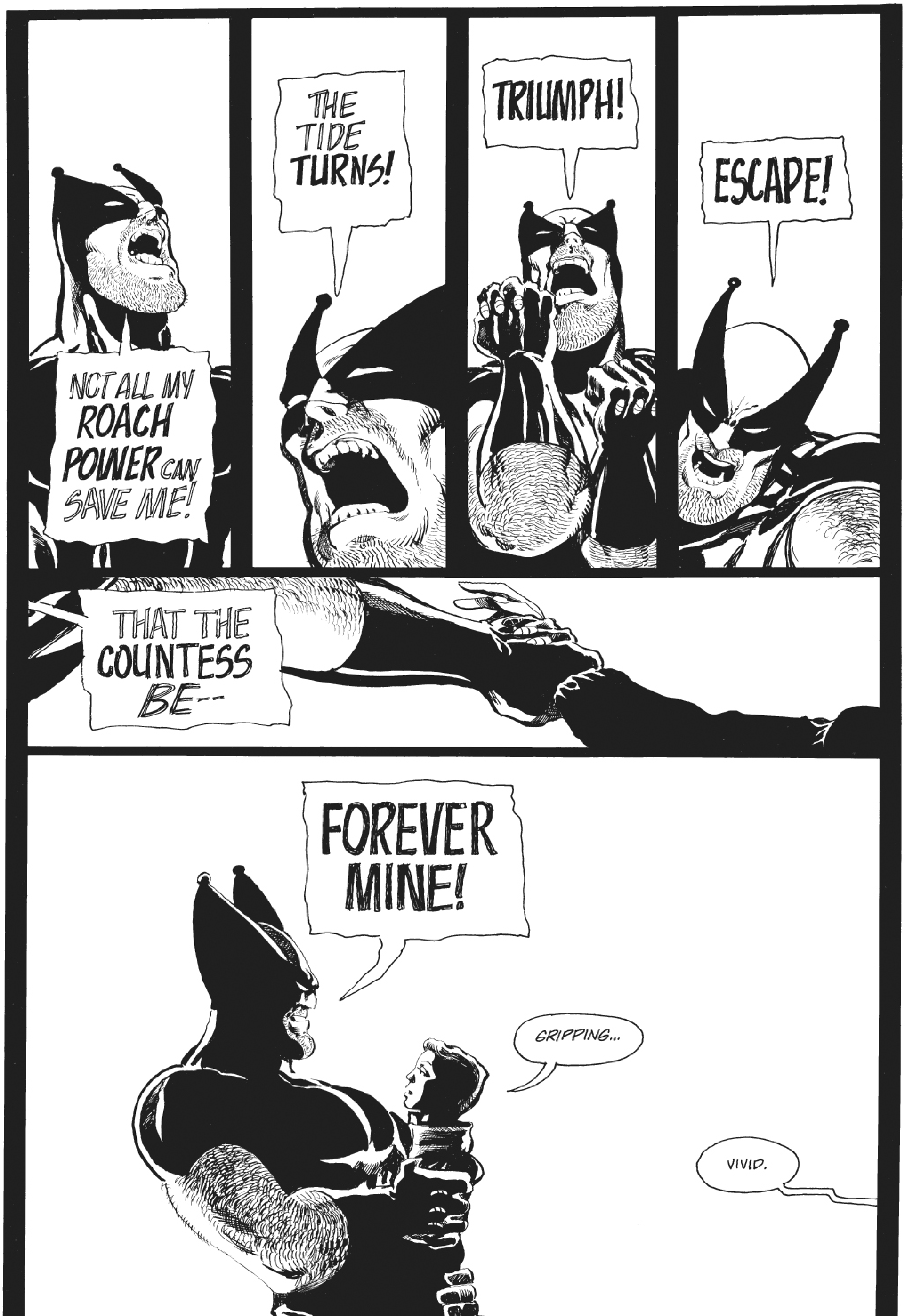

UNCLE ARTEMIS IS...
CEREBUS HEARD...
I HATE WAITING ...
IT'S PROBABLY MY LEAST FAVOURITE THING IN THE WHOLE WORLD ...
SO-- WHAT ABOUT THIS GIRL?
THE ONE YOU LIVED WITH WHEN YOU WERE A TAX COLLECTOR ...
OH.
ONE DAY CEREBUS CAME HOME AND THERE WAS A ... NOTE.
WHICH WAS ODD ...SINCE CEREBUS KNEW SHE DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO WRITE.

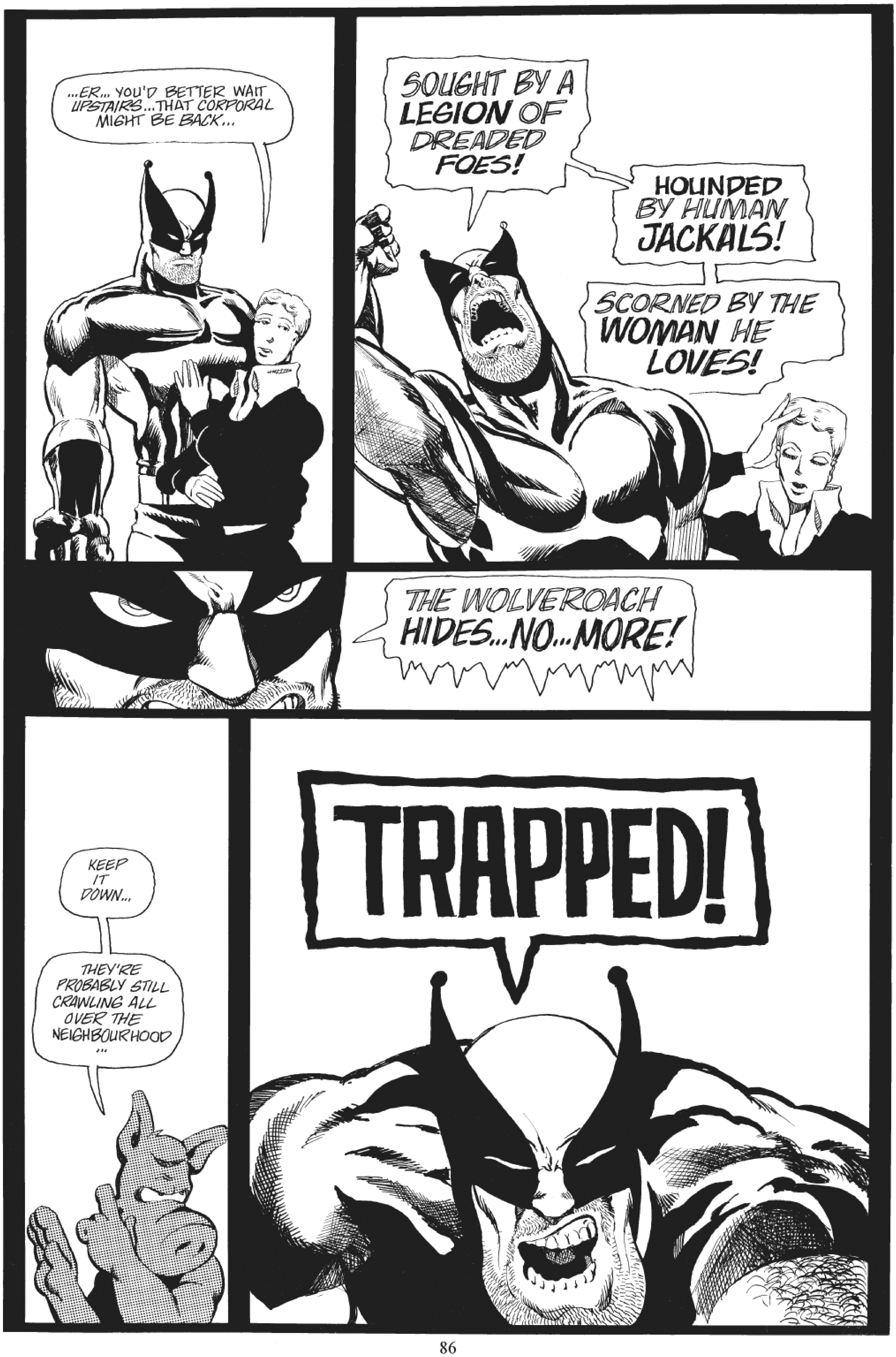

WHAT DID IT SAY...?
"I'M LEAVING YOU FOREVER. DON'T TRY TO FIND ME. IT'S OVER. MICHELLE AND THOMAS."
"AND THOMAS?"
NICE TOUCH, DON'T YOU THINK?
MM.
SO HER NAME WAS...
AYE.
I WONDERED WHY YOU TOLD ME ABOUT HER...

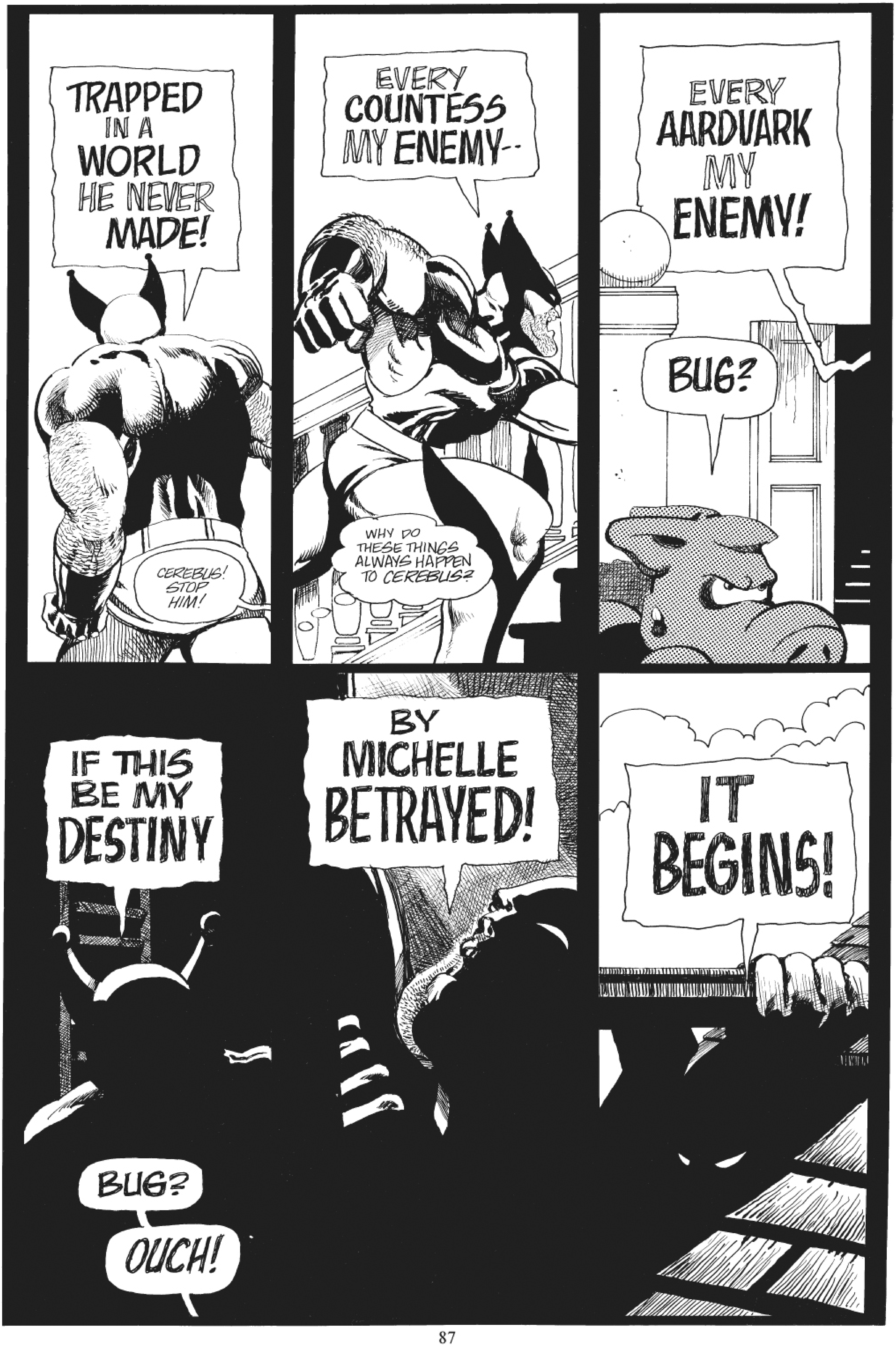


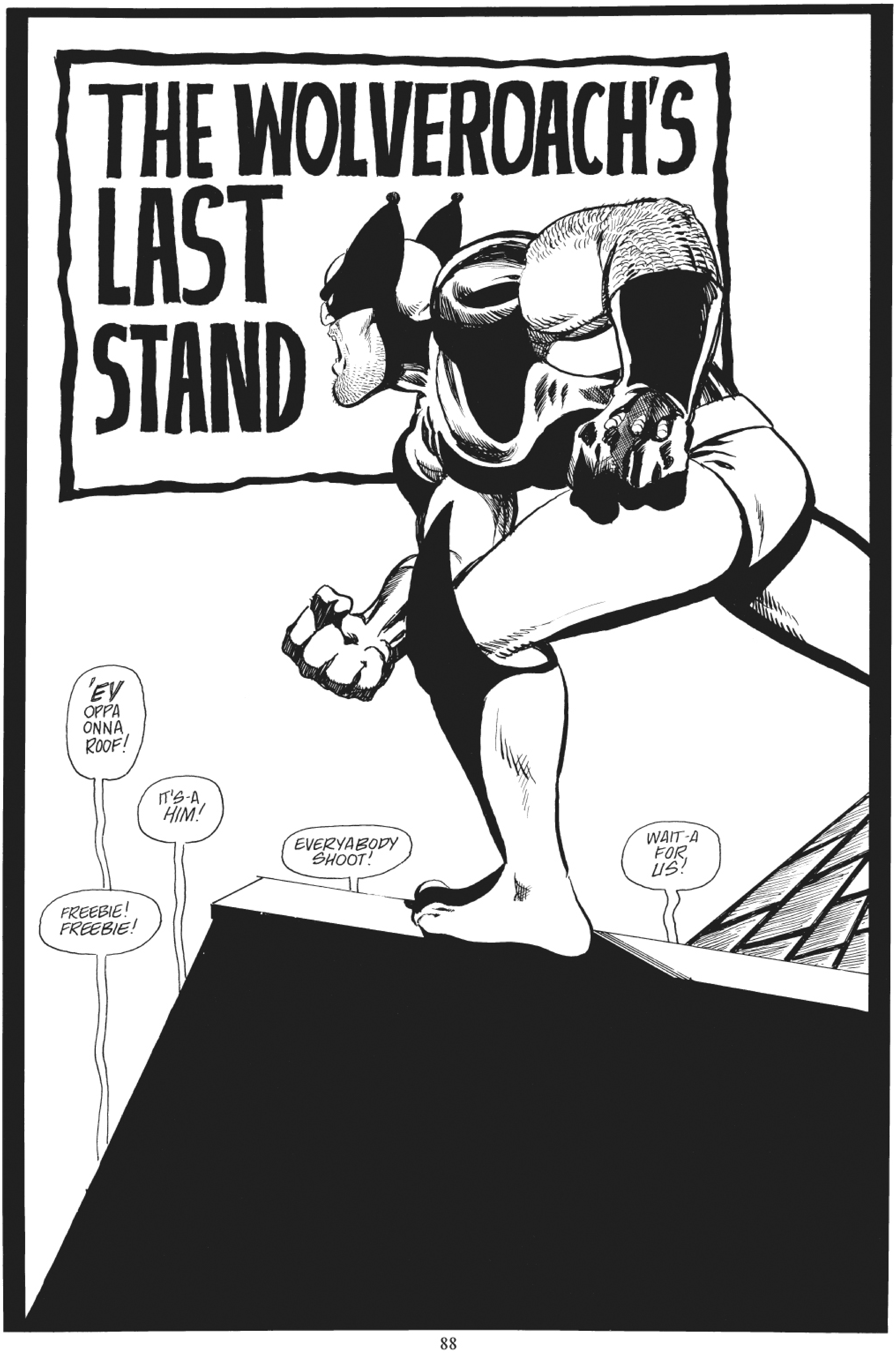

DO YOU WANT CEREBUS TO STAY DOWN HERE WITH YOU OR DO YOU WANT TO BE ALONE?
I PROBABLY WON'T SAY MUCH.
THAT'S NOT WHAT CEREBUS ASKED YOU...
DO WHATEVER YOU WANT...


MICHELLE
MMM
MICHELLE
MWHA?
COMPANY.
UNCLE ARTEMIS!!
THEY HAD YOU TRAPPED-- HOW DID YOU GET AWAY...?
THROUGH THE MERCILESS STREETS!--
PURSUIT OF THE WOLVEROACH!
CONFRONTATION!
WHEN STRIKES THE CROSSBOW!


NOT ALL MY ROACH POWER CAN SAVE ME!
THE TIDE TURNS!
TRIUMPH!
ESCAPE!
THAT THE COUNTESS BE--
FOREVER MINE!
GRIPPING...
VIVID.

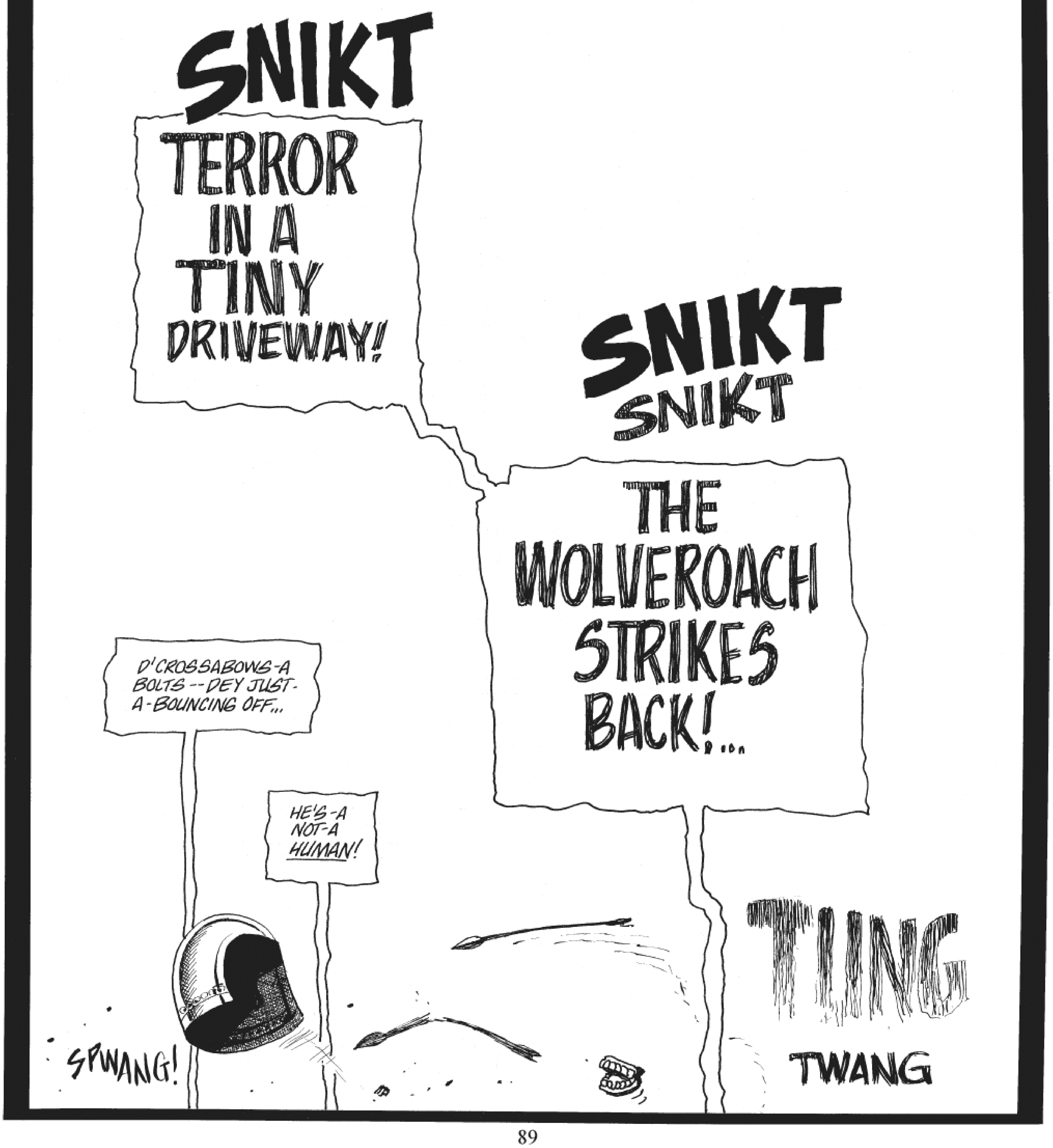

...ER... YOU'D BETTER WAIT UPSTAIRS... THAT CORPORAL MIGHT BE BACK...
SOUGHT BY A **LEGION** OF DREADED FOES!
HOUNDED BY HUMAN **JACKALS!**
SCORNED BY THE **WOMAN** HE **LOVES!**
THE WOLVEROACH **HIDES...NO...MORE!**
KEEP IT DOWN...
THEY'RE PROBABLY STILL CRAWLING ALL OVER THE NEIGHBOURHOOD ...
TRAPPED!

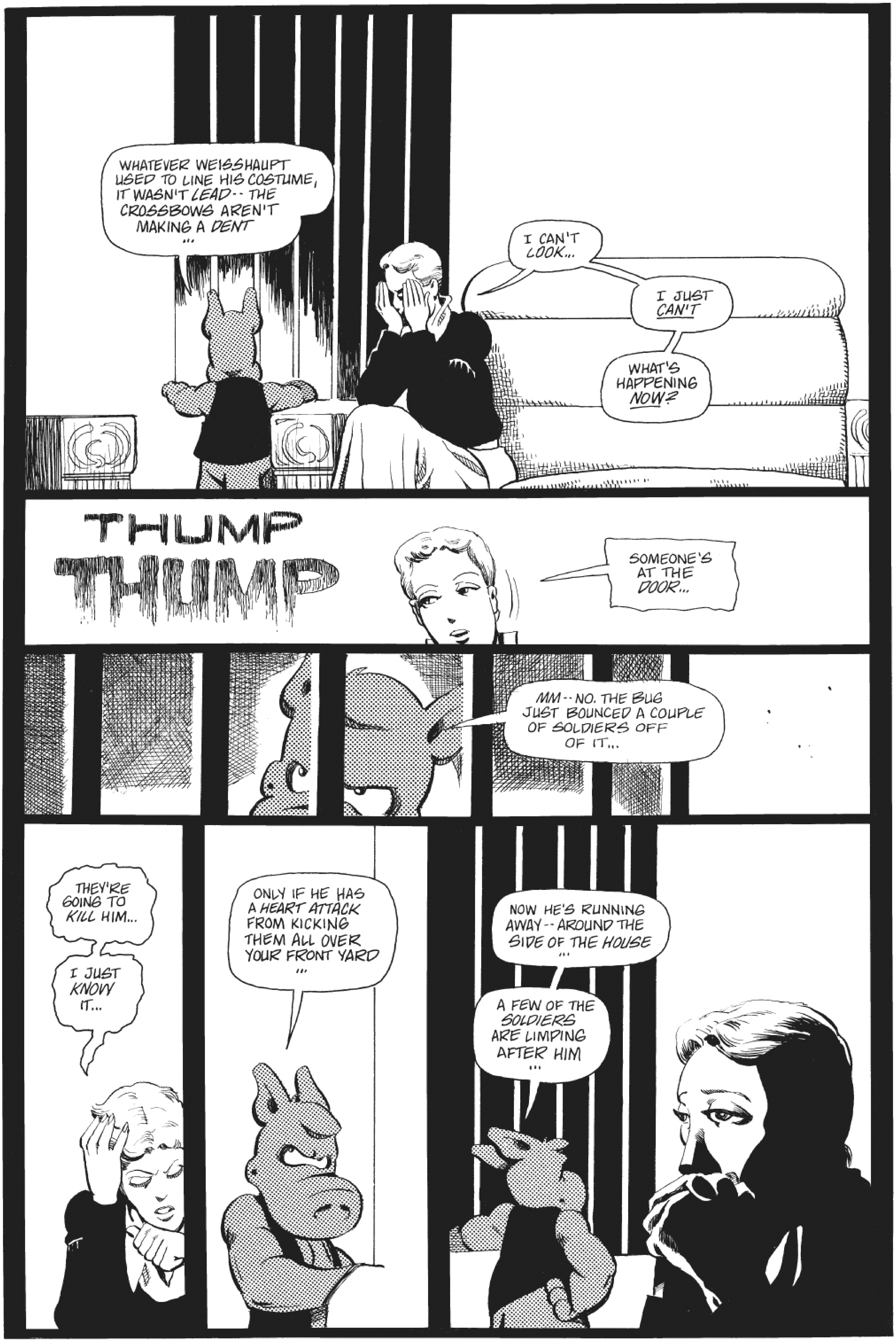

TRAPPED IN A WORLD HE NEVER MADE!
CEREBUS! STOP HIM!
EVERY COUNTESS MY ENEMY--
WHY DO THESE THINGS ALWAYS HAPPEN TO CEREBUS?
EVERY AARDVARK MY ENEMY!
BUG?
IF THIS BE MY DESTINY
BUG?
OUCH!
BY MICHELLE BETRAYED!
IT BEGINS!

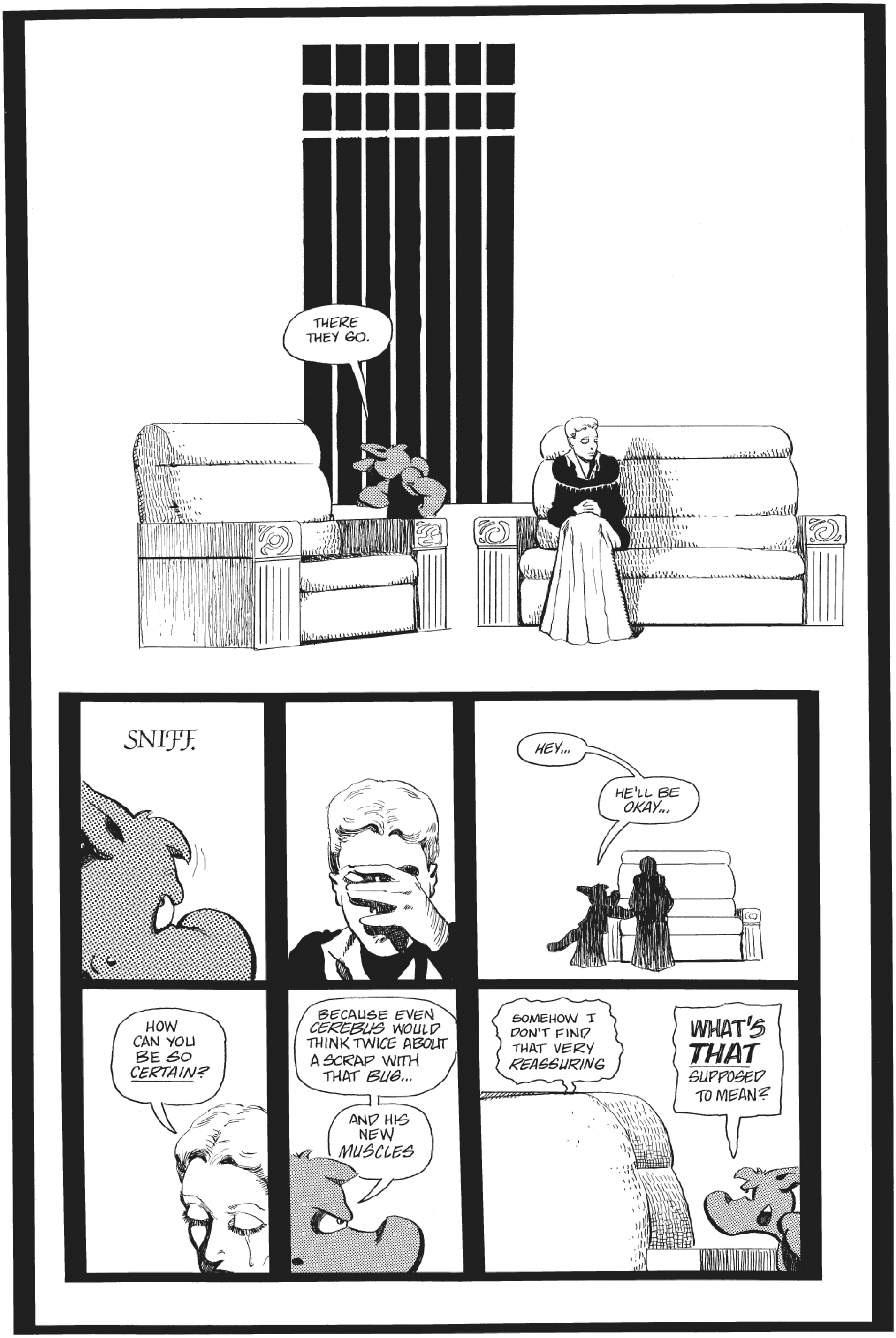

THE WOLVEROACH'S LAST STAND
'EV OPPA ONNA ROOF!
FREEBIE! FREEBIE!
IT'S-A HIM!
EVERYABODY SHOOT!
WAIT-A FOR US!

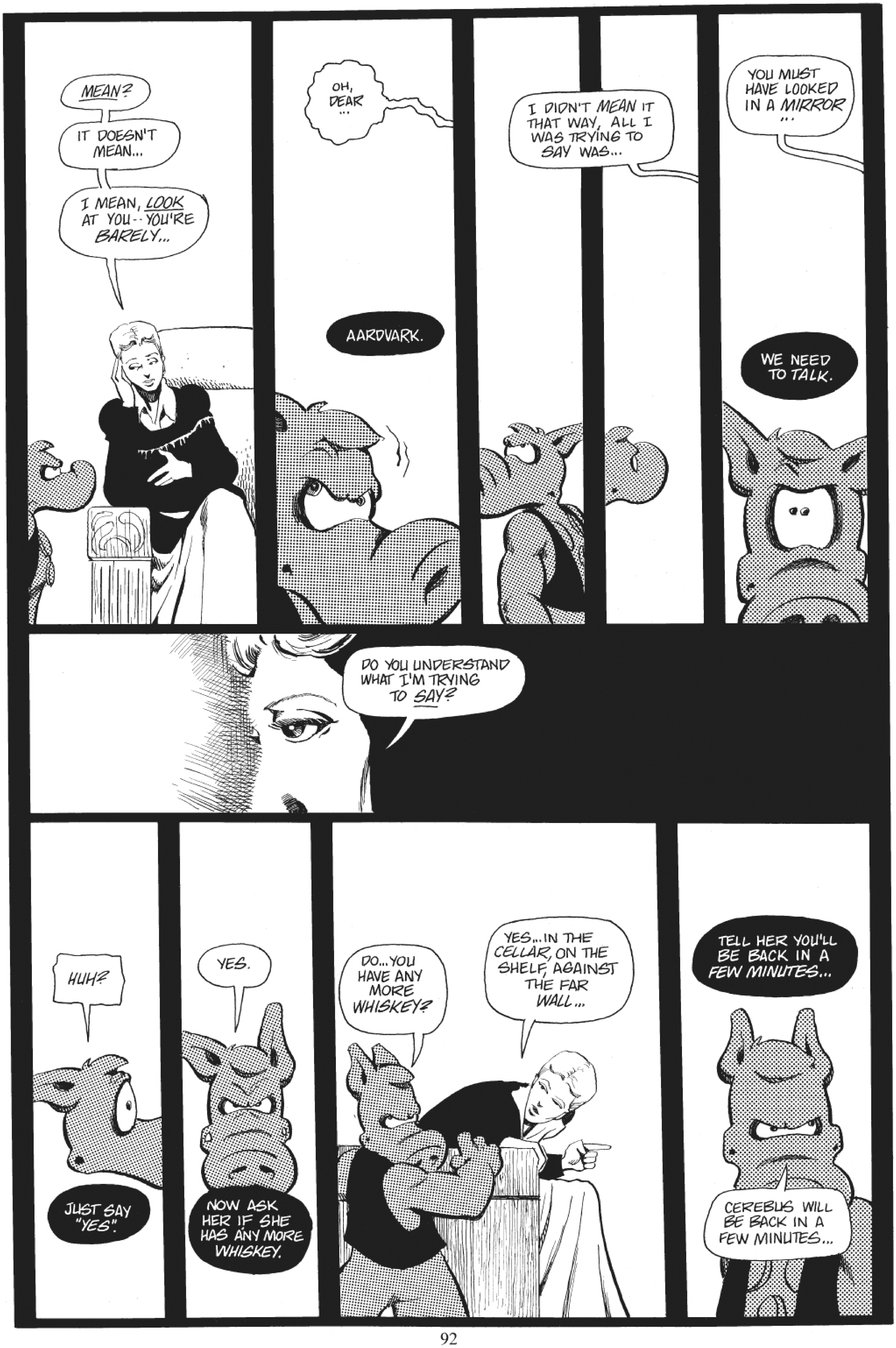
PART 3

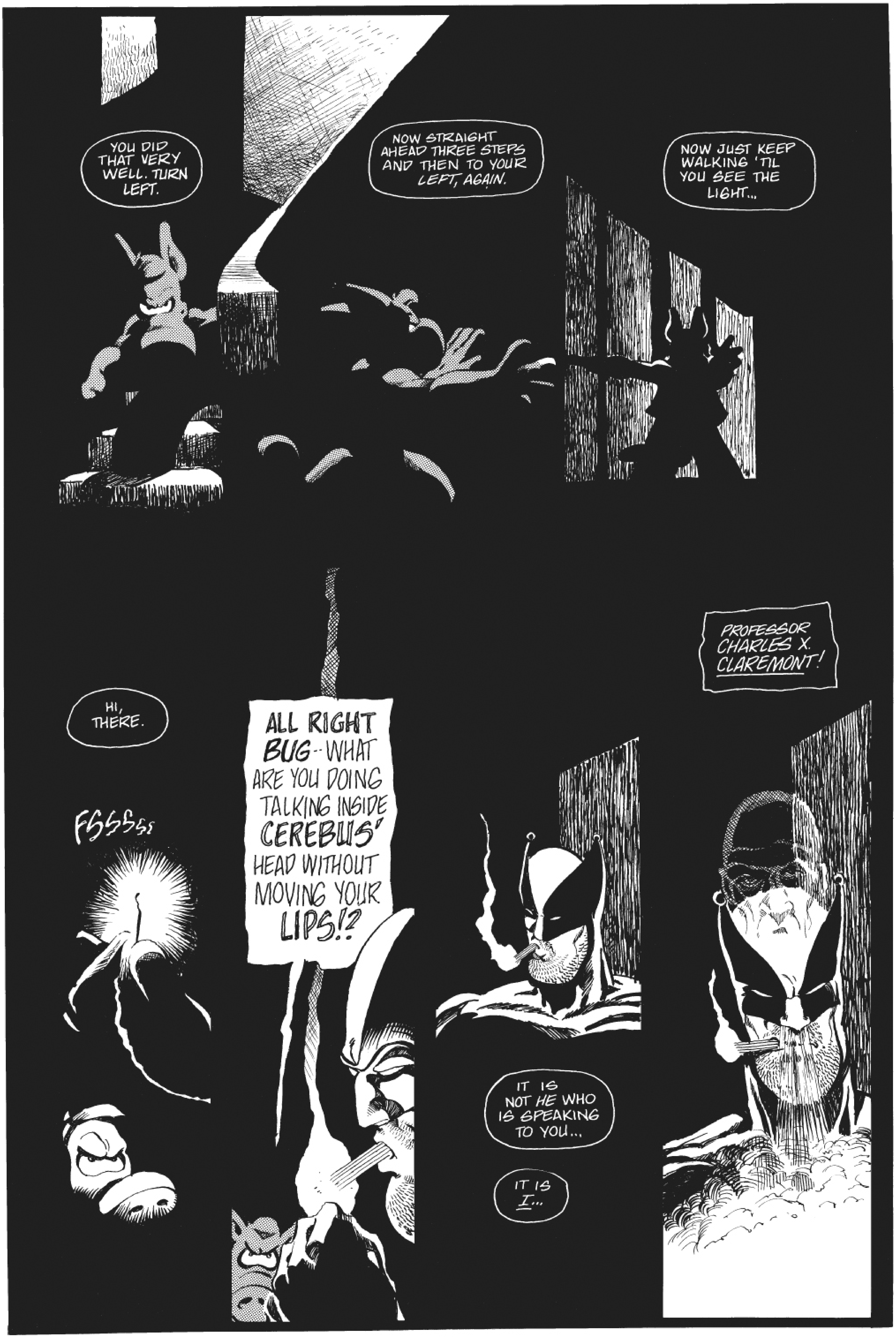
THE MYSTIC WE

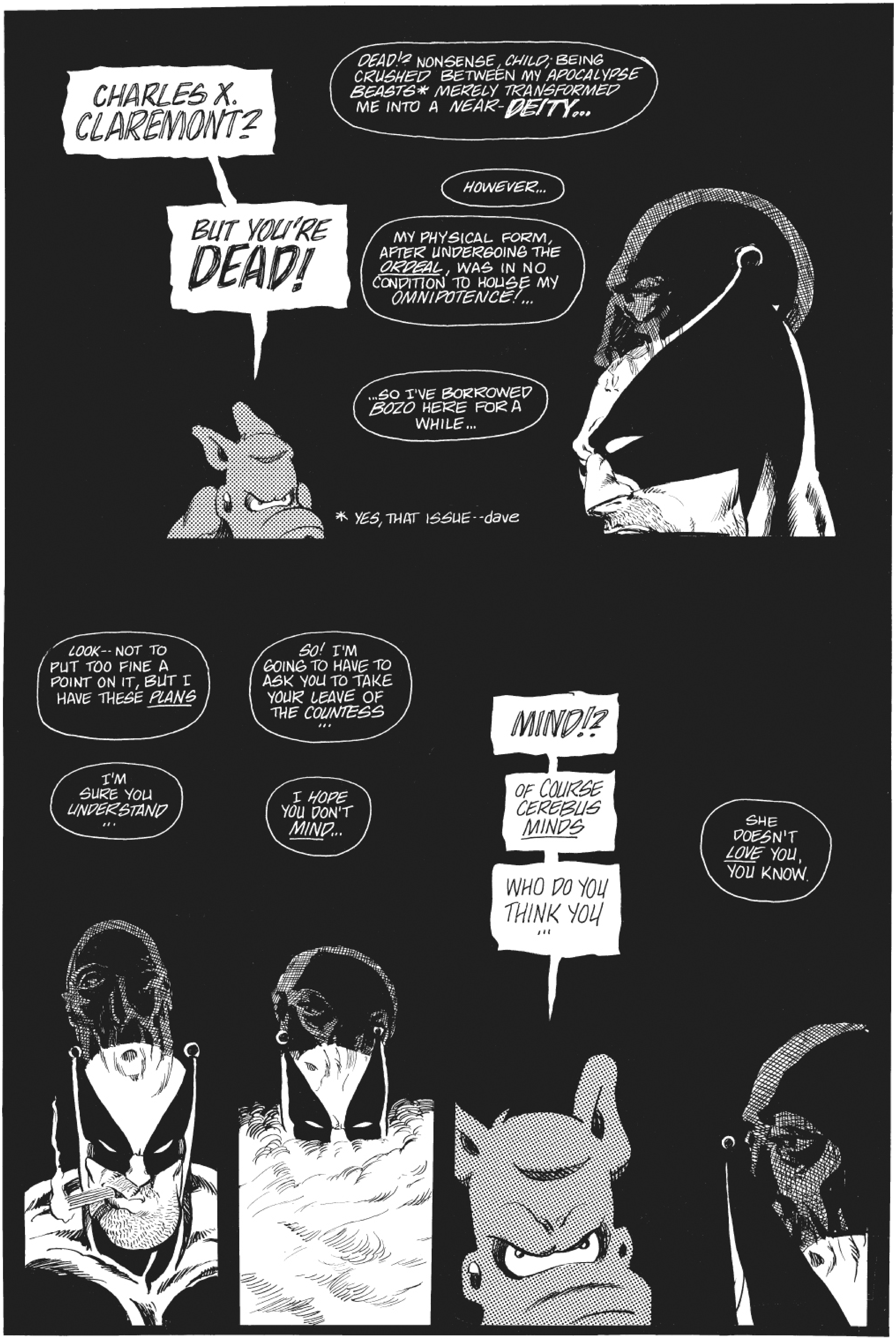

SNIKT
TERROR IN A TINY DRIVEWAY!
SNIKT
SNIKT
THE WOLVEROACH STRIKES BACK!...
D'CROSSABOWS-A BOLTS -- DEY JUST-A-BOUNCING OFF...
HE'S-A NOT-A HUMAN!
TING
SPWANG!
TWANG

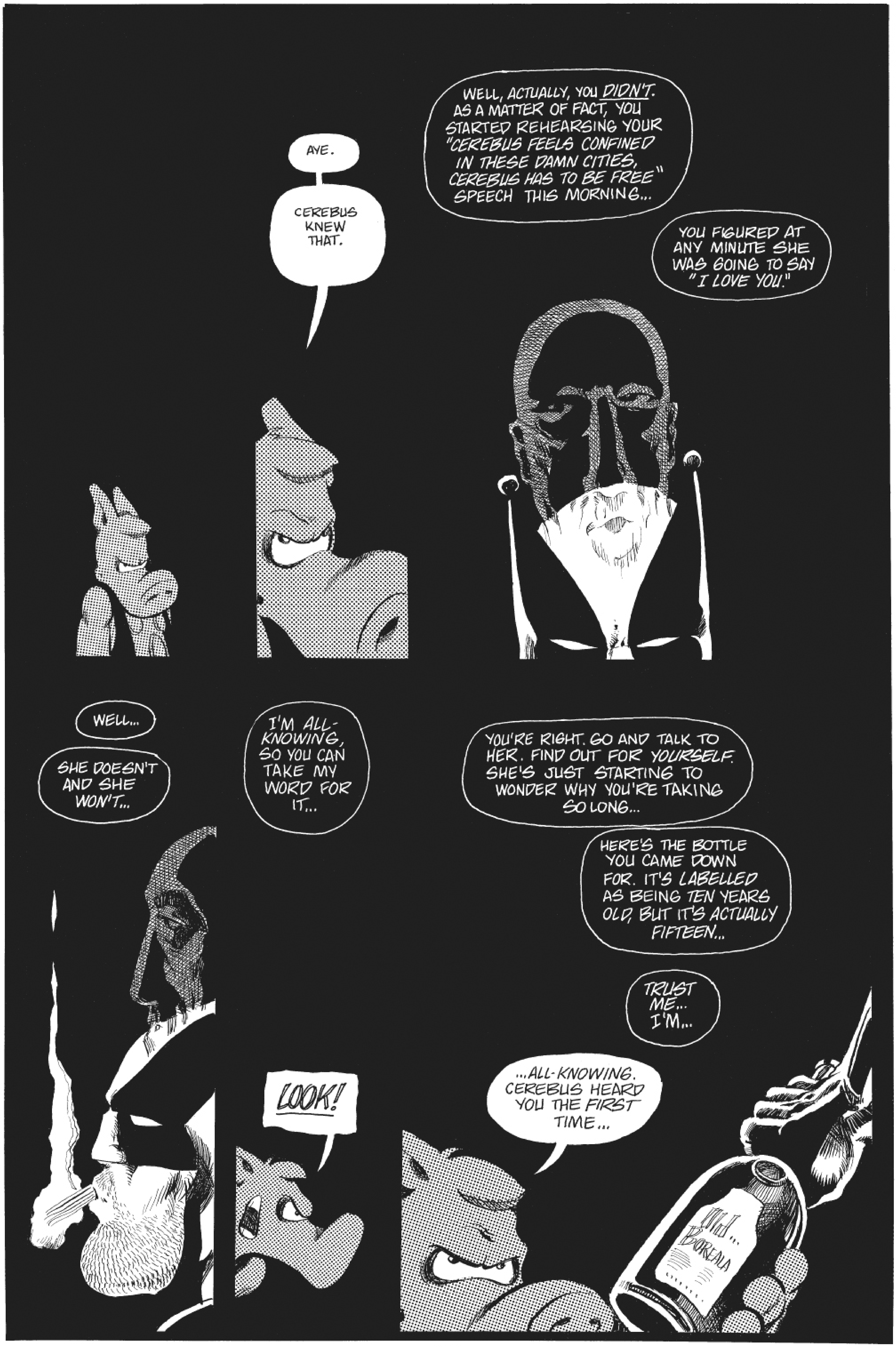

WHATEVER WEISSHAUPT USED TO LINE HIS COSTUME, IT WASN'T *LEAD*-- THE CROSSBOWS AREN'T MAKING A *DENT* ...
I CAN'T *LOOK*...
I JUST CAN'T
WHAT'S HAPPENING *NOW?*
THUMP THUMP
SOMEONE'S AT THE *DOOR*...
MM-- NO. THE BUG JUST BOUNCED A COUPLE OF SOLDIERS OFF OF IT...
THEY'RE GOING TO *KILL* HIM...
I JUST *KNOW* IT...
ONLY IF HE HAS A *HEART ATTACK* FROM KICKING THEM ALL OVER YOUR FRONT YARD ...
NOW HE'S RUNNING AWAY-- AROUND THE SIDE OF THE *HOUSE* ...
A FEW OF THE *SOLDIERS* ARE LIMPING AFTER HIM ...

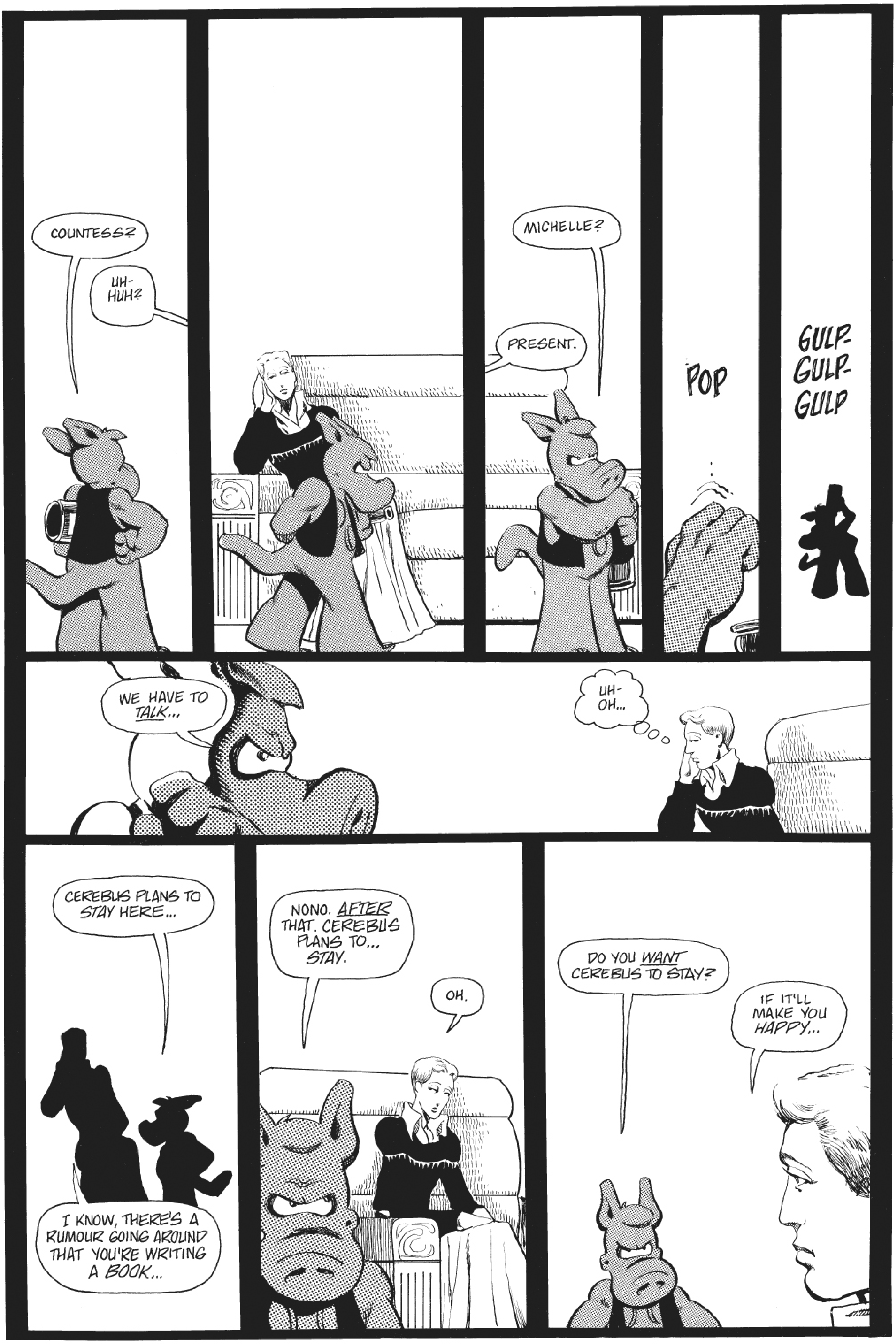

THERE THEY GO.
SNIFF.
HEY...
HE'LL BE OKAY...
HOW CAN YOU BE SO CERTAIN?
BECAUSE EVEN CEREBUS WOULD THINK TWICE ABOUT A SCRAP WITH THAT BUG...
AND HIS NEW MUSCLES
SOMEHOW I DON'T FIND THAT VERY REASSURING
WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?

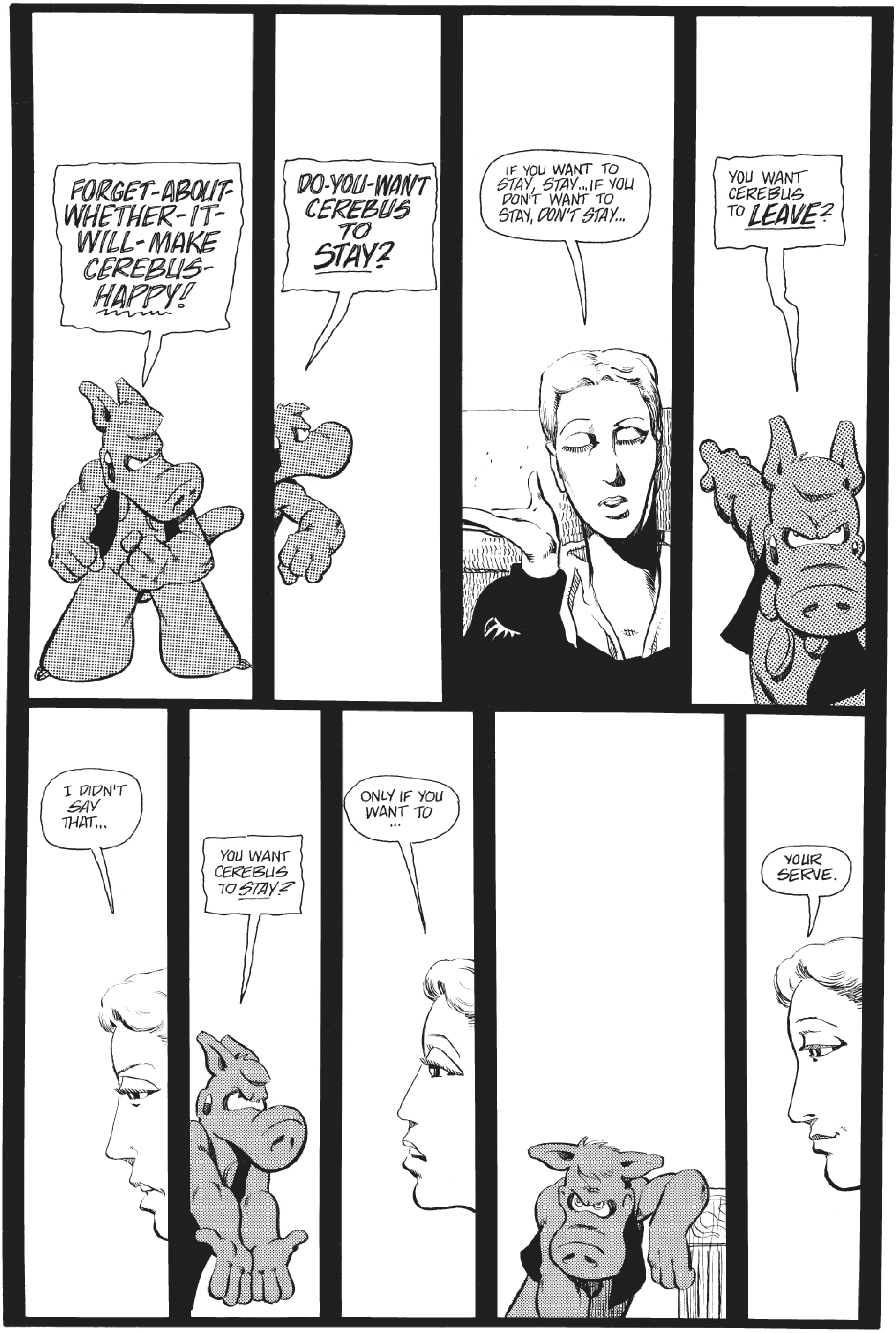

MEAN?
IT DOESN'T MEAN...
I MEAN, LOOK AT YOU--YOU'RE BARELY...
OH, DEAR ...
AARDVARK.
I DIDN'T MEAN IT THAT WAY, ALL I WAS TRYING TO SAY WAS...
YOU MUST HAVE LOOKED IN A MIRROR ...
WE NEED TO TALK.
DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT I'M TRYING TO SAY?
HUH?
JUST SAY "YES".
YES.
NOW ASK HER IF SHE HAS ANY MORE WHISKEY.
DO...YOU HAVE ANY MORE WHISKEY?
YES...IN THE CELLAR, ON THE SHELF, AGAINST THE FAR WALL...
TELL HER YOU'LL BE BACK IN A FEW MINUTES...
CEREBUS WILL BE BACK IN A FEW MINUTES...

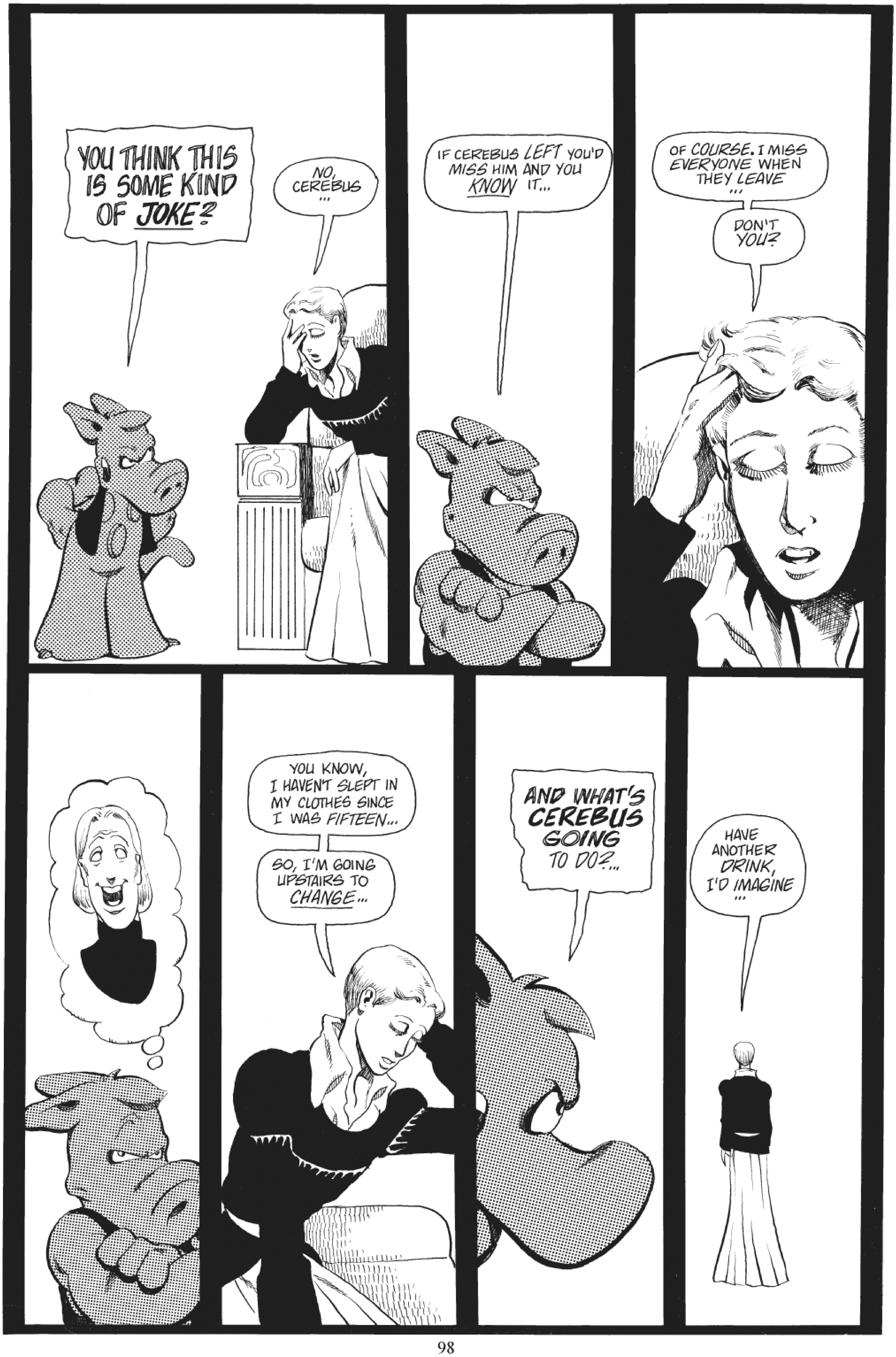

YOU DID THAT VERY WELL. TURN LEFT.
NOW STRAIGHT AHEAD THREE STEPS AND THEN TO YOUR LEFT, AGAIN.
NOW JUST KEEP WALKING 'TIL YOU SEE THE LIGHT...
HI, THERE.
FSSSss
ALL RIGHT BUG--WHAT ARE YOU DOING TALKING INSIDE CEREBUS' HEAD WITHOUT MOVING YOUR LIPS!?
IT IS NOT HE WHO IS SPEAKING TO YOU...
IT IS I...
PROFESSOR CHARLES X. CLAREMONT!

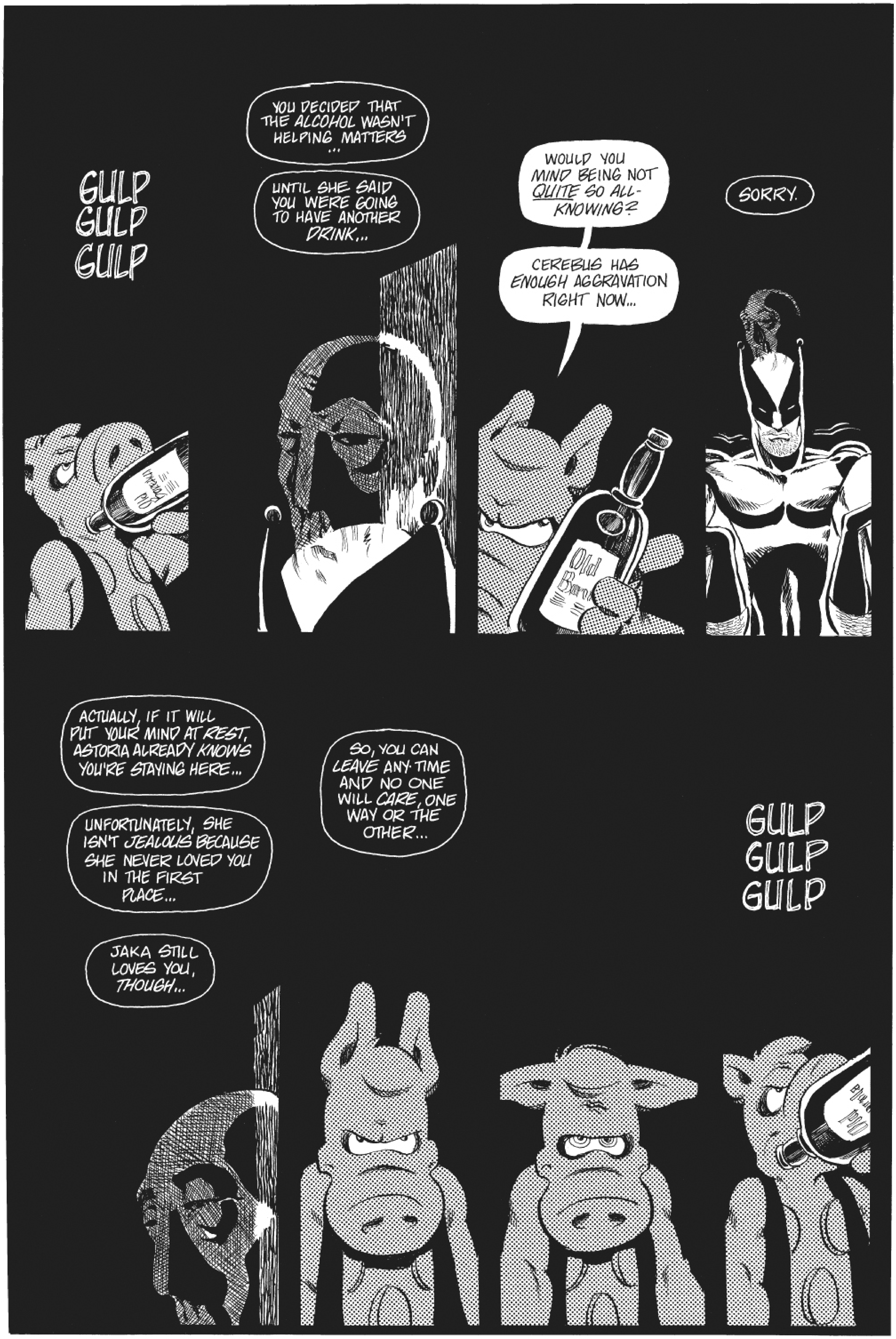

CHARLES X. CLAREMONT?
BUT YOU'RE DEAD!
DEAD!? NONSENSE, CHILD; BEING CRUSHED BETWEEN MY APOCALYPSE BEASTS* MERELY TRANSFORMED ME INTO A NEAR-DEITY...
HOWEVER...
MY PHYSICAL FORM, AFTER UNDERGOING THE ORDEAL, WAS IN NO CONDITION TO HOUSE MY OMNIPOTENCE!...
...SO I'VE BORROWED BOZO HERE FOR A WHILE...
* YES, THAT ISSUE--dave
LOOK-- NOT TO PUT TOO FINE A POINT ON IT, BUT I HAVE THESE PLANS
I'M SURE YOU UNDERSTAND ...
SO! I'M GOING TO HAVE TO ASK YOU TO TAKE YOUR LEAVE OF THE COUNTESS ...
I HOPE YOU DON'T MIND...
MIND!?
OF COURSE CEREBUS MINDS
WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ...
SHE DOESN'T LOVE YOU, YOU KNOW.

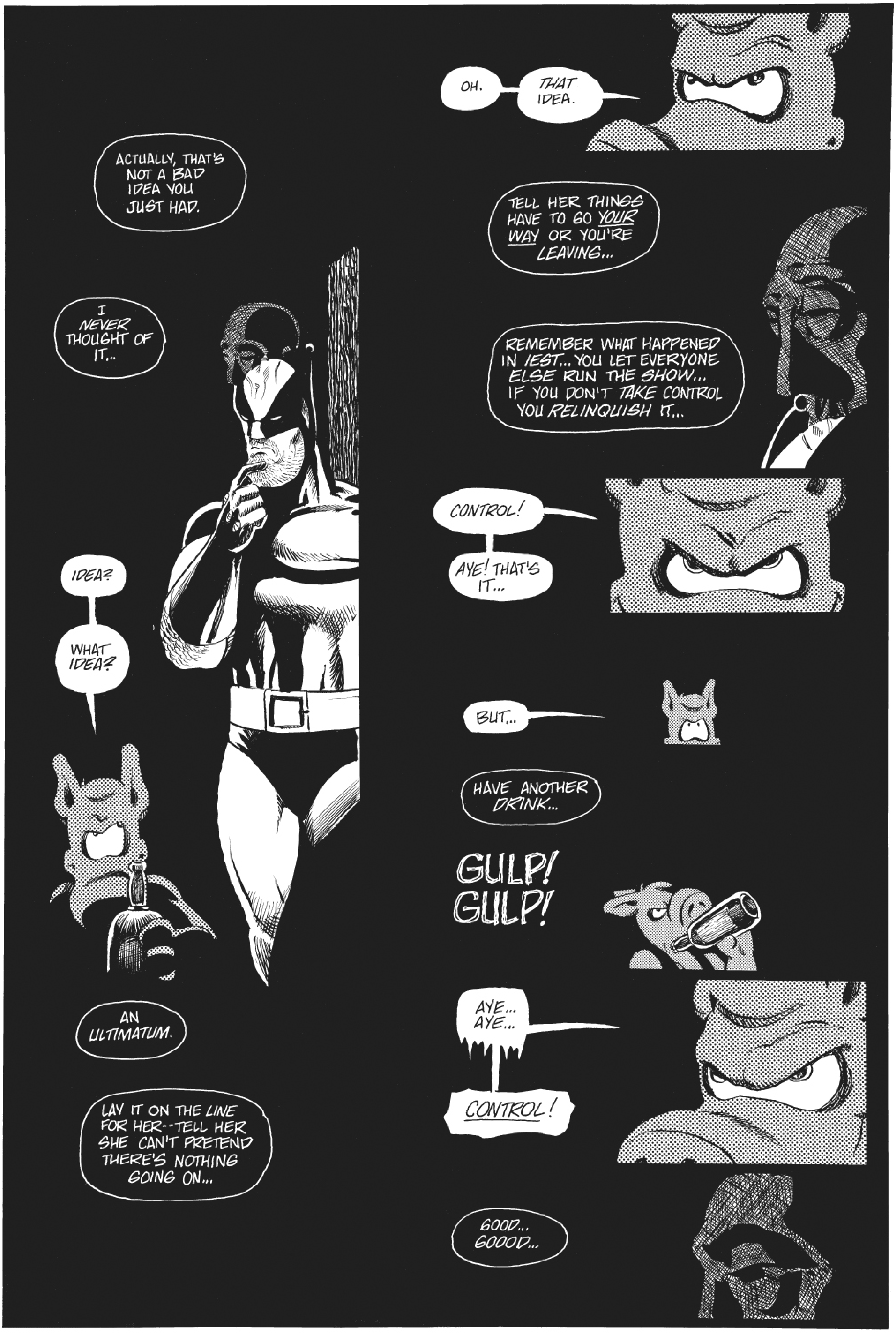

AYE.
CEREBUS KNEW THAT.
WELL, ACTUALLY, YOU DIDN'T. AS A MATTER OF FACT, YOU STARTED REHEARSING YOUR "CEREBUS FEELS CONFINED IN THESE DAMN CITIES, CEREBUS HAS TO BE FREE" SPEECH THIS MORNING...
YOU FIGURED AT ANY MINUTE SHE WAS GOING TO SAY "I LOVE YOU."
WELL...
SHE DOESN'T AND SHE WON'T...
I'M ALL-KNOWING, SO YOU CAN TAKE MY WORD FOR IT...
YOU'RE RIGHT. GO AND TALK TO HER. FIND OUT FOR YOURSELF. SHE'S JUST STARTING TO WONDER WHY YOU'RE TAKING SO LONG...
HERE'S THE BOTTLE YOU CAME DOWN FOR. IT'S LABELLED AS BEING TEN YEARS OLD, BUT IT'S ACTUALLY FIFTEEN...
TRUST ME... I'M...
LOOK!
...ALL-KNOWING. CEREBUS HEARD YOU THE FIRST TIME...

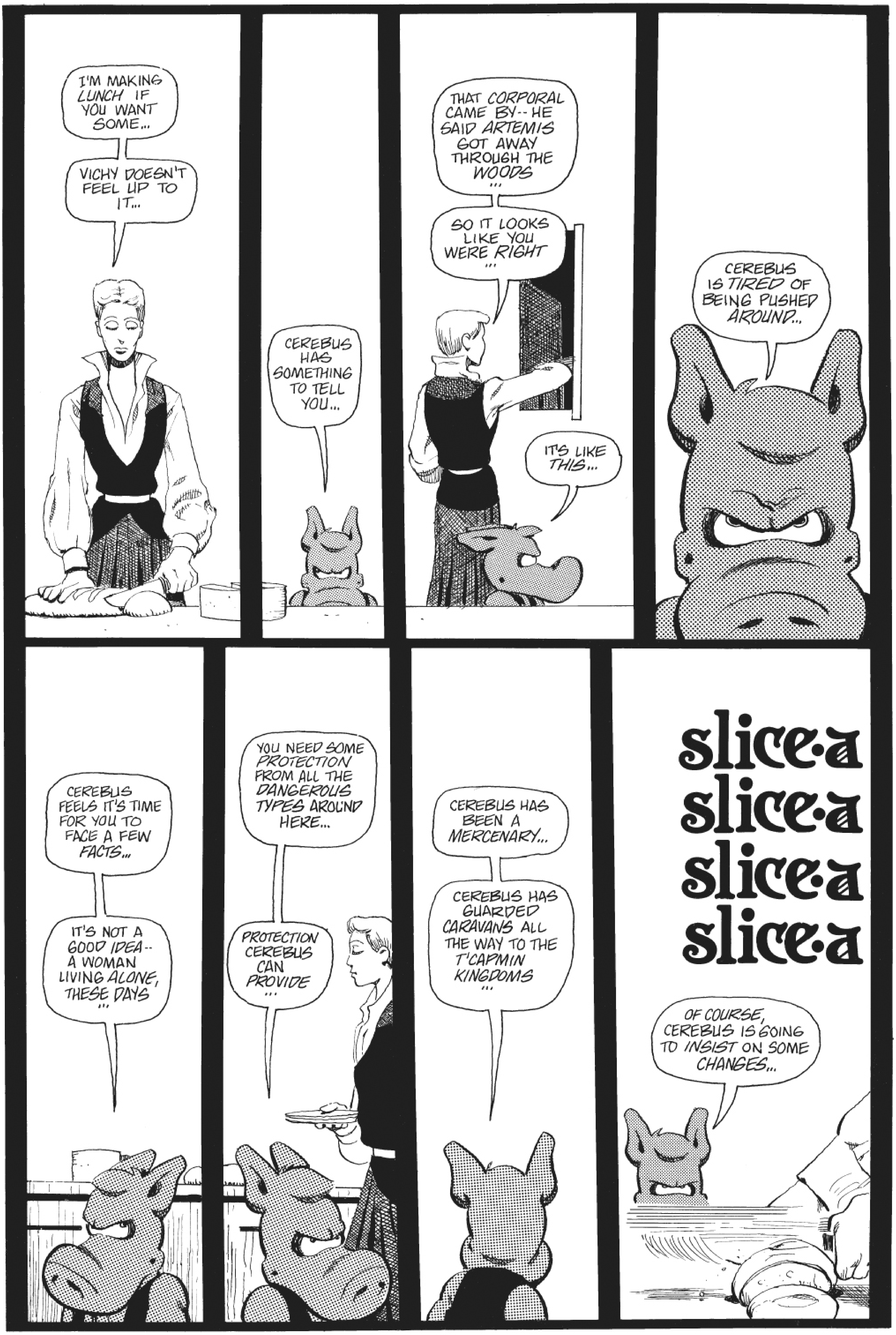

COUNTESS?
UH-HUH?
MICHELLE?
PRESENT.
POP
GULP-GULP-GULP
WE HAVE TO *TALK*...
UH-OH...
CEREBUS PLANS TO STAY HERE...
I KNOW, THERE'S A RUMOUR GOING AROUND THAT YOU'RE WRITING A *BOOK*...
NONO. *AFTER* THAT. CEREBUS PLANS TO... *STAY*.
OH.
DO YOU *WANT* CEREBUS TO STAY?
IF IT'LL MAKE YOU *HAPPY*...

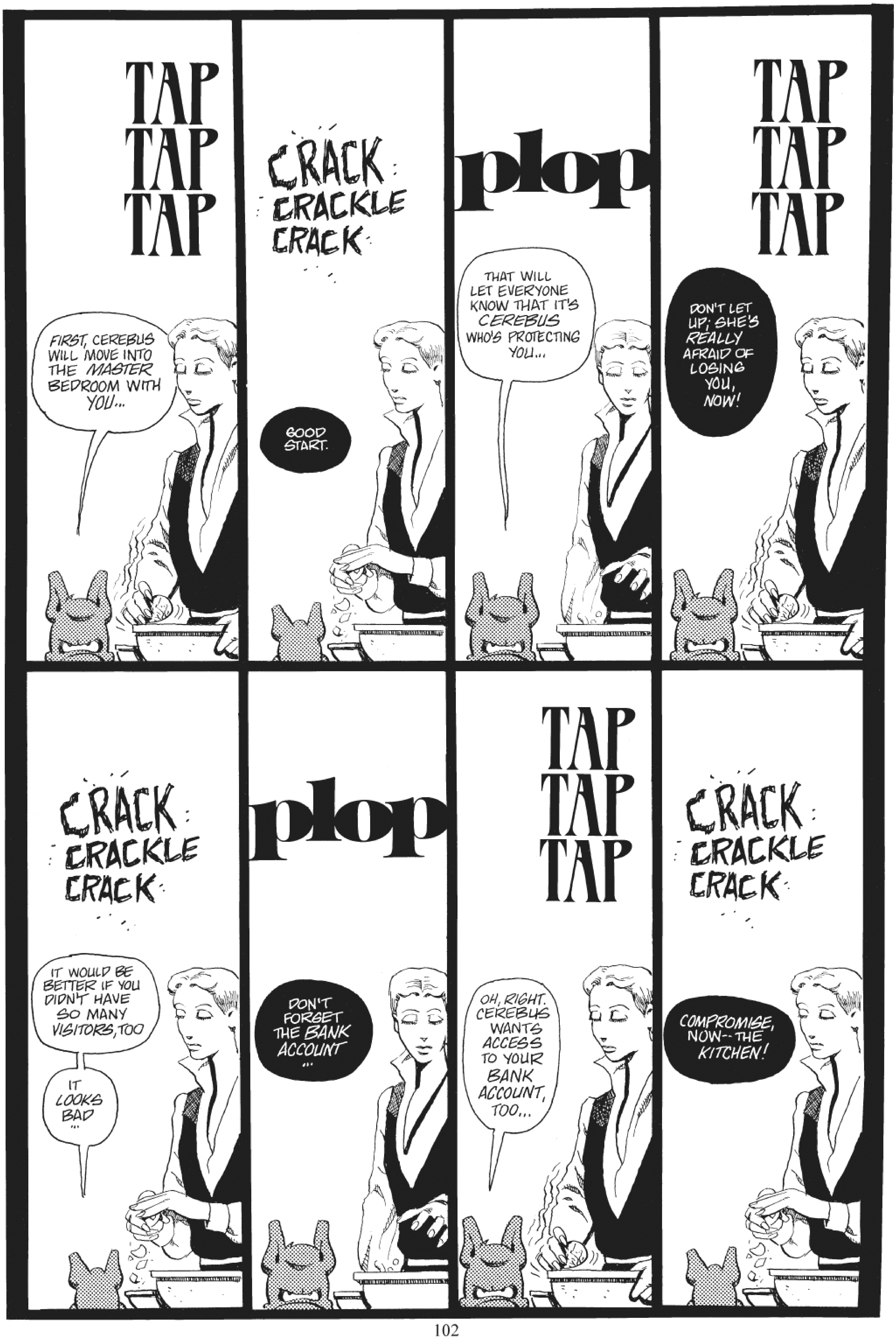

FORGET-ABOUT-WHETHER-IT-WILL-MAKE CEREBUS-HAPPY!
DO-YOU-WANT CEREBUS TO STAY?
IF YOU WANT TO STAY, STAY...IF YOU DON'T WANT TO STAY, DON'T STAY...
YOU WANT CEREBUS TO LEAVE?
I DIDN'T SAY THAT...
YOU WANT CEREBUS TO STAY?
ONLY IF YOU WANT TO ...
YOUR SERVE.

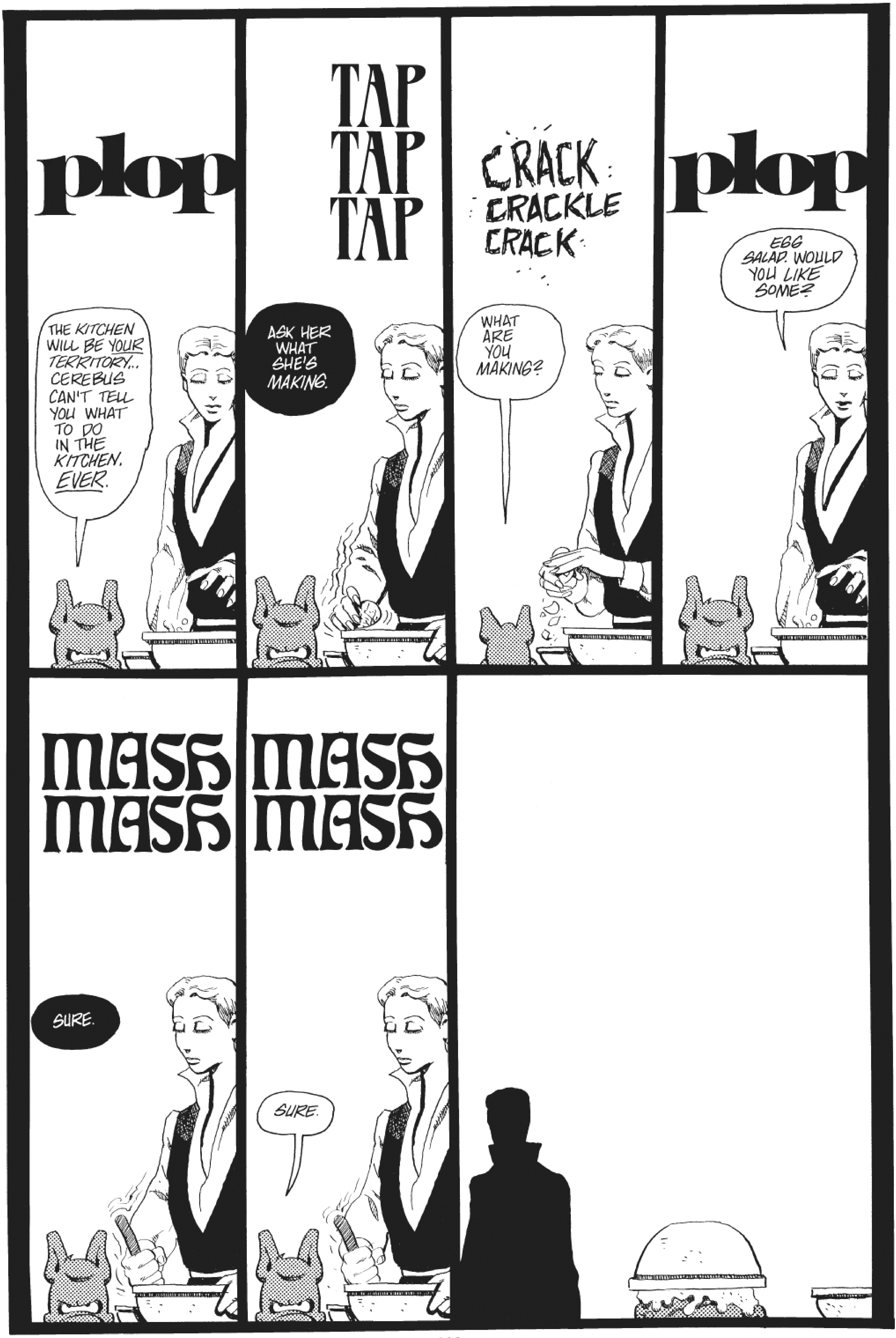

YOU THINK THIS IS SOME KIND OF JOKE?
NO, CEREBUS ...
IF CEREBUS LEFT YOU'D MISS HIM AND YOU KNOW IT...
OF COURSE. I MISS EVERYONE WHEN THEY LEAVE ...
DON'T YOU?
YOU KNOW, I HAVEN'T SLEPT IN MY CLOTHES SINCE I WAS FIFTEEN...
SO, I'M GOING UPSTAIRS TO CHANGE...
AND WHAT'S CEREBUS GOING TO DO?...
HAVE ANOTHER DRINK, I'D IMAGINE ...

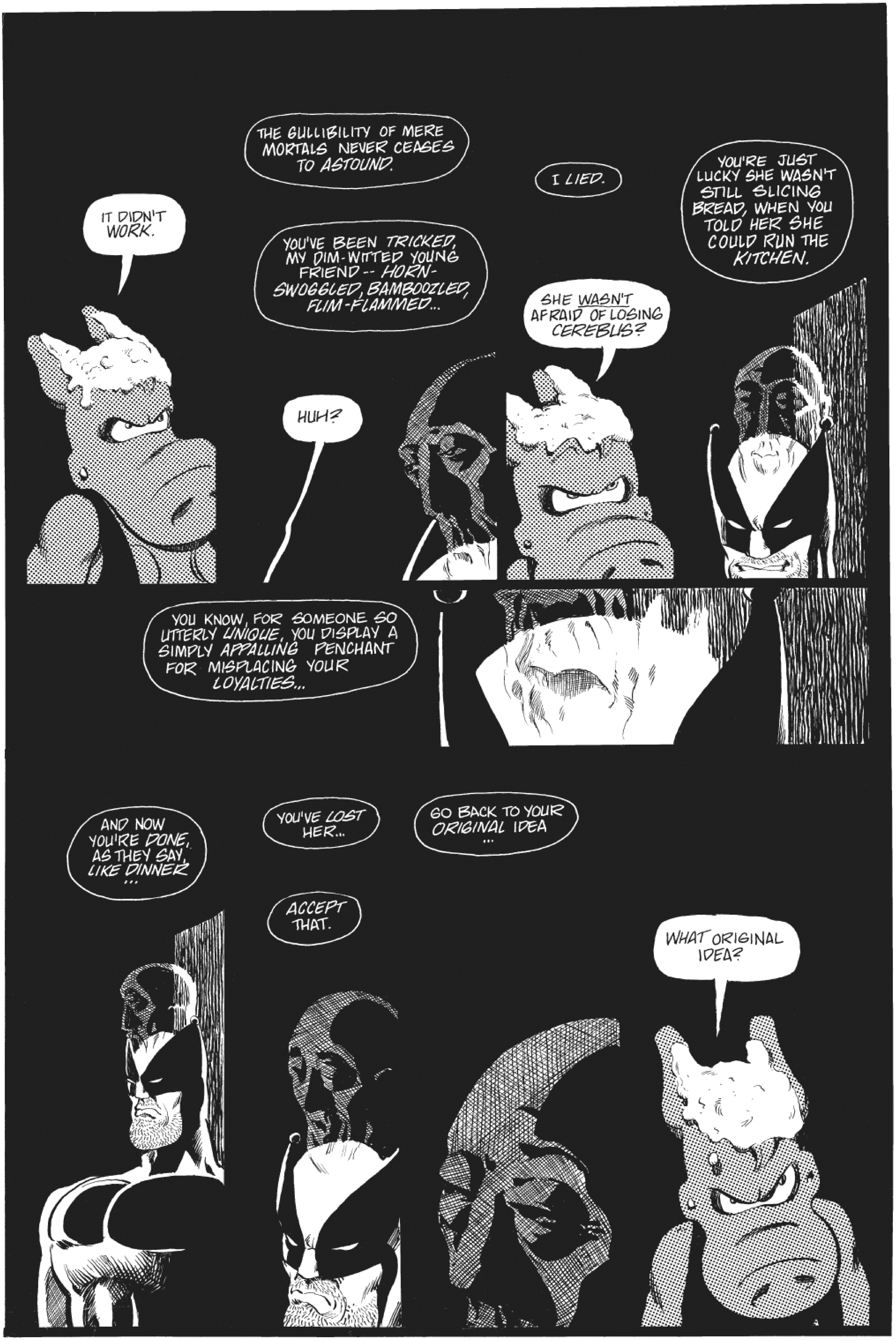

GULP GULP GULP
YOU DECIDED THAT THE *ALCOHOL* WASN'T HELPING MATTERS ...
UNTIL SHE SAID YOU WERE GOING TO HAVE ANOTHER *DRINK*...
WOULD YOU *MIND* BEING NOT *QUITE* SO ALL-KNOWING?
CEREBUS HAS ENOUGH AGGRAVATION RIGHT NOW...
SORRY.
ACTUALLY, IF IT WILL PUT YOUR MIND AT *REST*, ASTORIA ALREADY *KNOWS* YOU'RE STAYING HERE...
UNFORTUNATELY, SHE ISN'T *JEALOUS* BECAUSE SHE NEVER LOVED YOU IN THE FIRST PLACE...
JAKA STILL LOVES YOU, *THOUGH*...
SO, YOU CAN *LEAVE* ANY TIME AND NO ONE WILL *CARE*, ONE WAY OR THE OTHER...
GULP GULP GULP

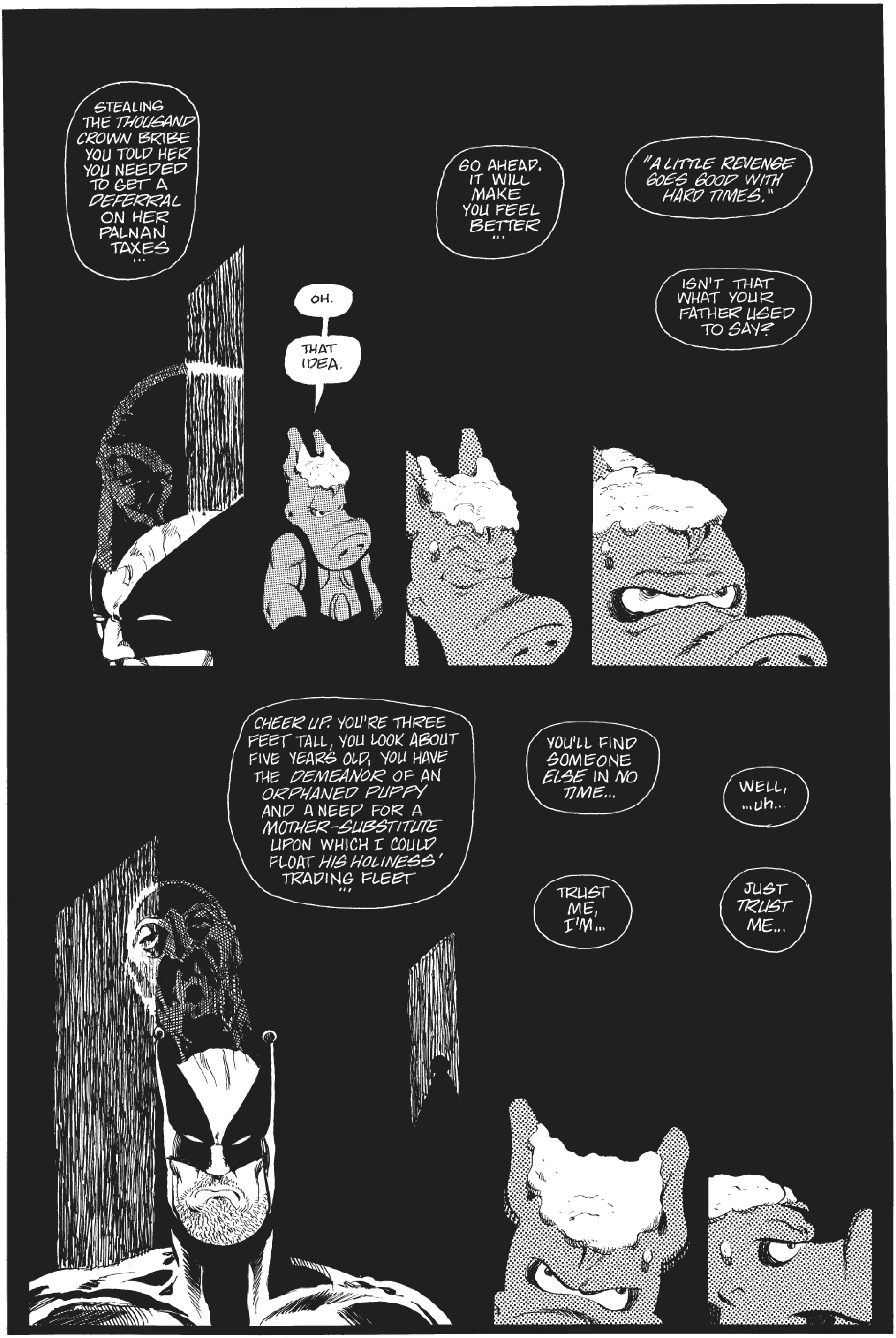

ACTUALLY, THAT'S NOT A BAD IDEA YOU JUST HAD.
I *NEVER* THOUGHT OF IT...
IDEA?
WHAT *IDEA?*
AN *ULTIMATUM.*
LAY IT ON THE *LINE* FOR HER--TELL HER SHE CAN'T PRETEND THERE'S NOTHING GOING ON...
OH.
THAT IDEA.
TELL HER THINGS HAVE TO GO *YOUR WAY* OR YOU'RE *LEAVING...*
REMEMBER WHAT HAPPENED IN *IEST*... YOU LET EVERYONE *ELSE RUN* THE *SHOW...* IF YOU DON'T *TAKE* CONTROL YOU *RELINQUISH* IT...
CONTROL!
AYE! THAT'S *IT...*
BUT...
HAVE ANOTHER *DRINK...*
GULP! GULP!
AYE... AYE...
CONTROL!
GOOD... GOOOD...

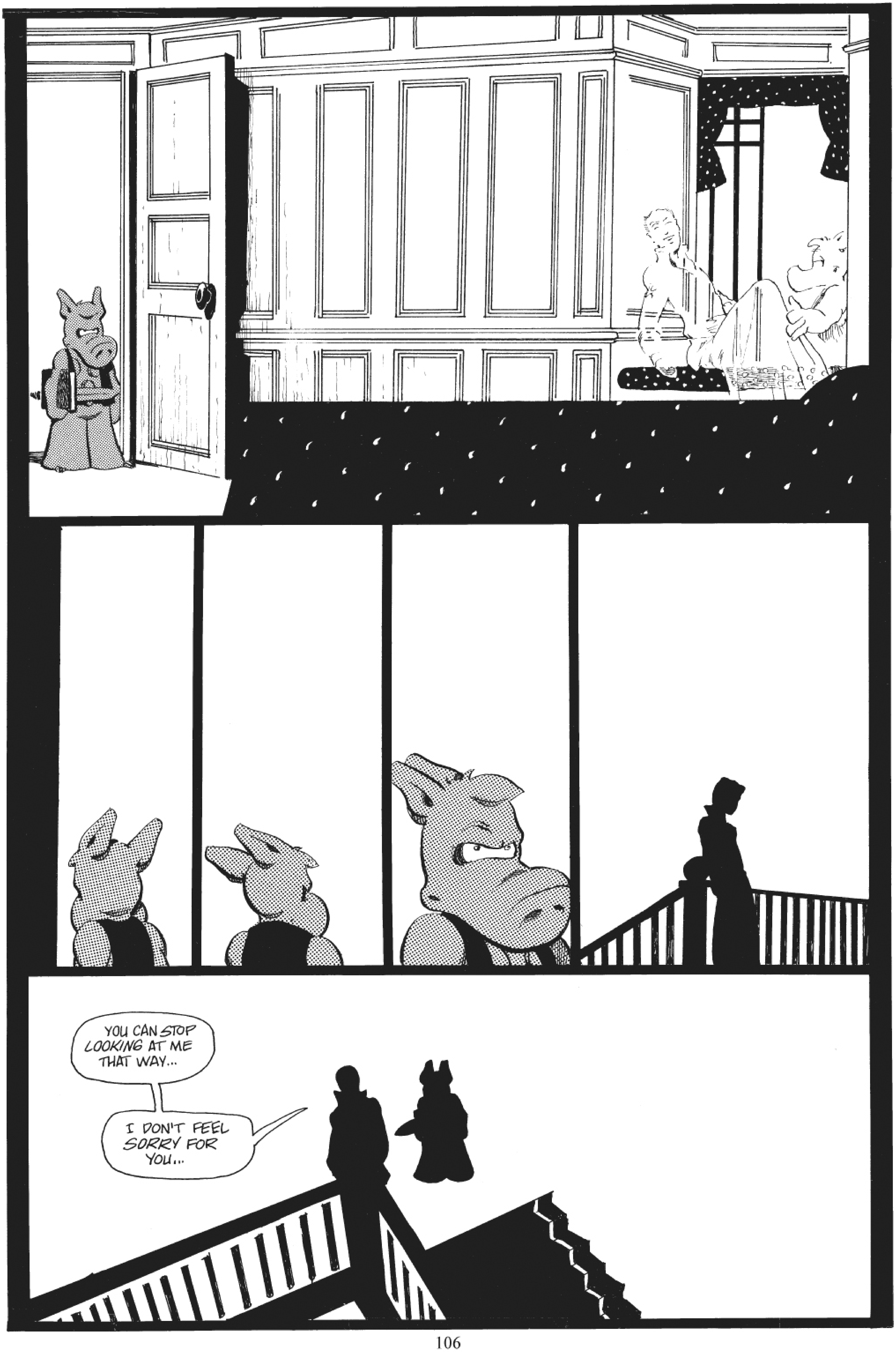

I'M MAKING LUNCH IF YOU WANT SOME...
VICHY DOESN'T FEEL UP TO IT...
CEREBUS HAS SOMETHING TO TELL YOU...
THAT CORPORAL CAME BY-- HE SAID ARTEMIS GOT AWAY THROUGH THE WOODS...
SO IT LOOKS LIKE YOU WERE RIGHT...
IT'S LIKE THIS...
CEREBUS IS TIRED OF BEING PUSHED AROUND...
CEREBUS FEELS IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO FACE A FEW FACTS...
IT'S NOT A GOOD IDEA-- A WOMAN LIVING ALONE, THESE DAYS...
YOU NEED SOME PROTECTION FROM ALL THE DANGEROUS TYPES AROUND HERE...
PROTECTION CEREBUS CAN PROVIDE...
CEREBUS HAS BEEN A MERCENARY...
CEREBUS HAS GUARDED CARAVANS ALL THE WAY TO THE T'CAPMIN KINGDOMS...
slice·a slice·a slice·a slice·a
OF COURSE, CEREBUS IS GOING TO INSIST ON SOME CHANGES...

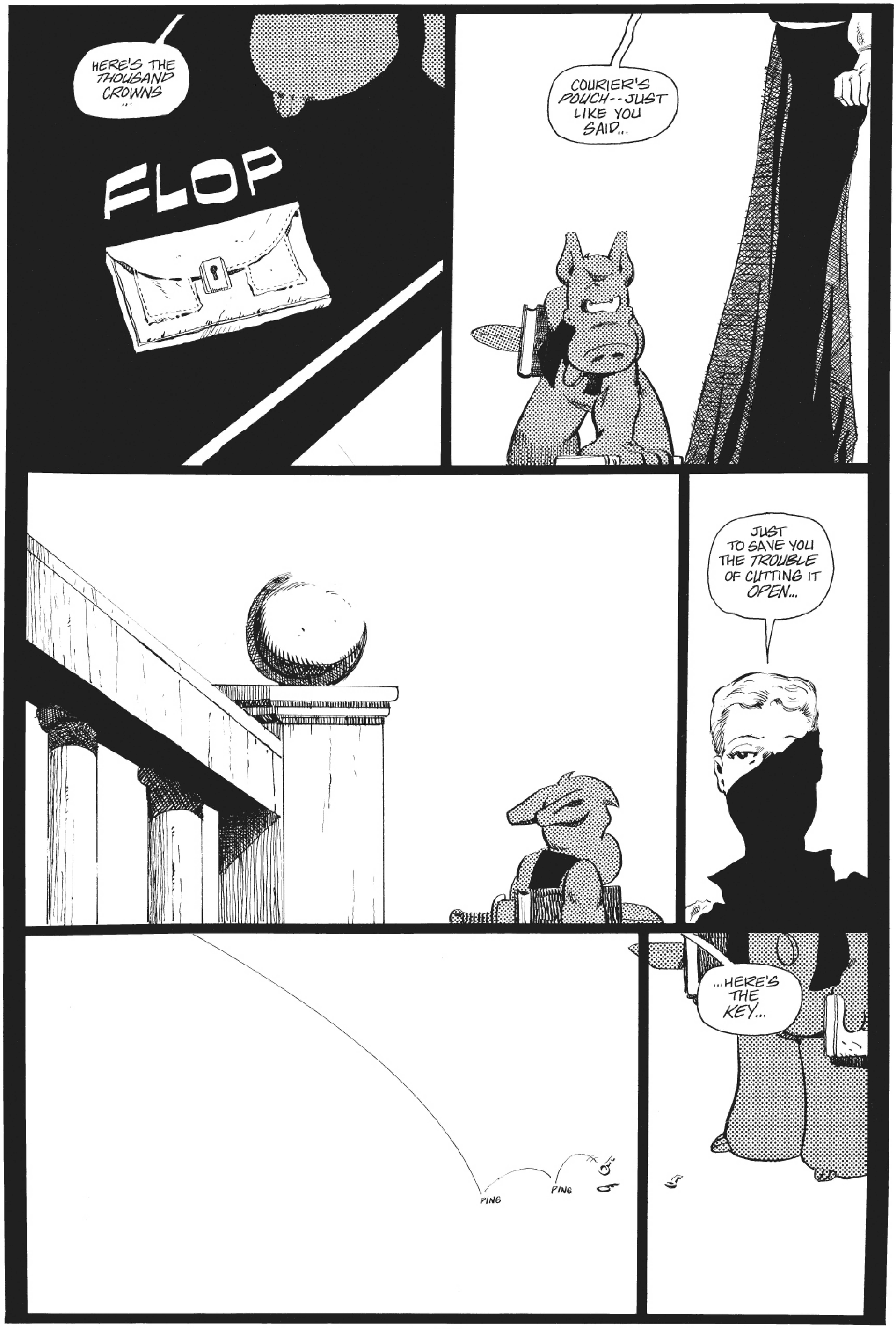

TAP TAP TAP
FIRST, CEREBUS WILL MOVE INTO THE MASTER BEDROOM WITH YOU...
CRACK CRACKLE CRACK
GOOD START.
plop
THAT WILL LET EVERYONE KNOW THAT IT'S CEREBUS WHO'S PROTECTING YOU...
TAP TAP TAP
DON'T LET UP; SHE'S REALLY AFRAID OF LOSING YOU, NOW!
CRACK CRACKLE CRACK
IT WOULD BE BETTER IF YOU DIDN'T HAVE SO MANY VISITORS, TOO
IT LOOKS BAD...
plop
DON'T FORGET THE BANK ACCOUNT...
TAP TAP TAP
OH, RIGHT. CEREBUS WANTS ACCESS TO YOUR BANK ACCOUNT, TOO...
CRACK CRACKLE CRACK
COMPROMISE, NOW--THE KITCHEN!

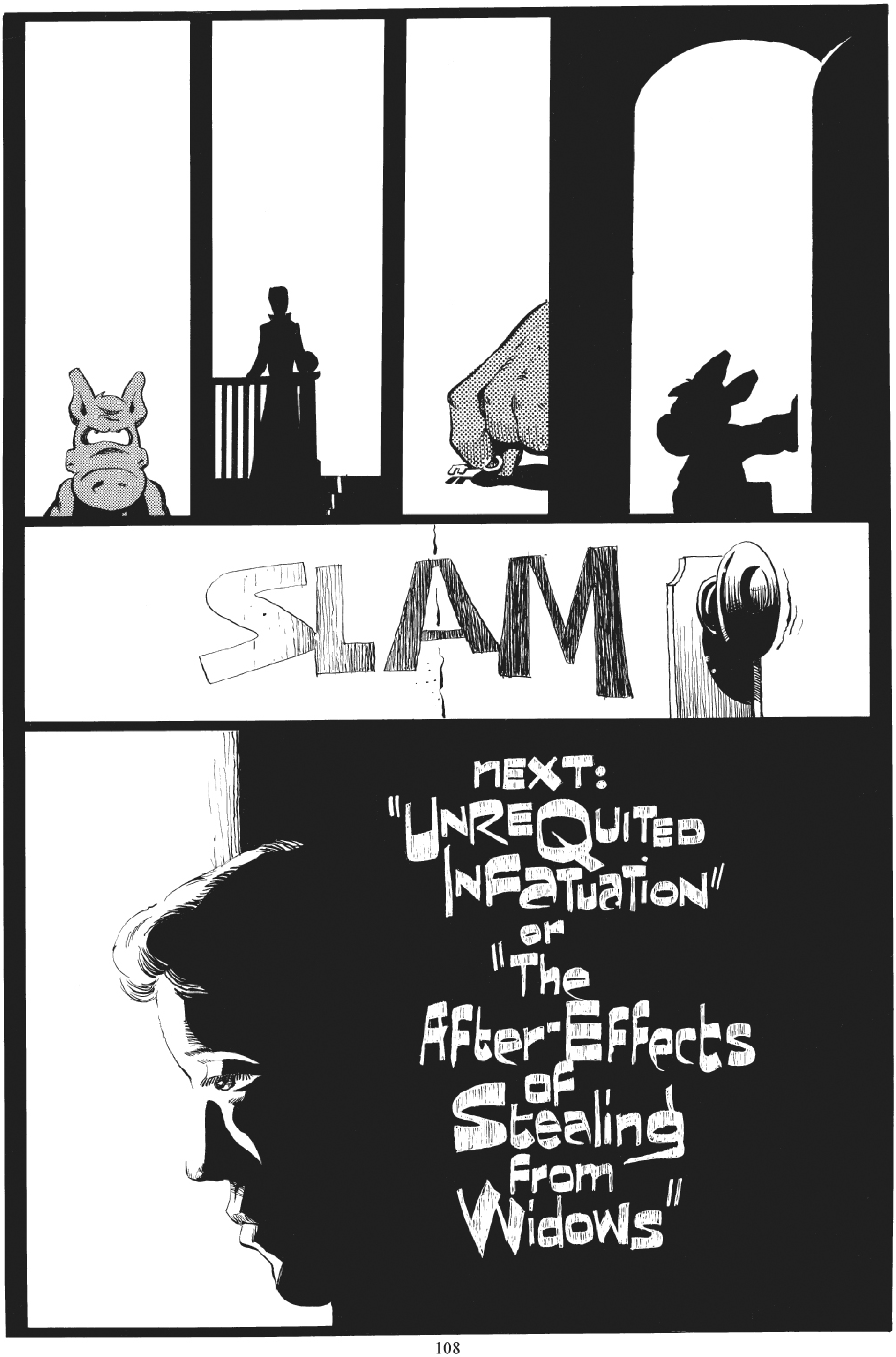

plop
THE KITCHEN WILL BE YOUR TERRITORY... CEREBUS CAN'T TELL YOU WHAT TO DO IN THE KITCHEN. EVER.
TAP TAP TAP
ASK HER WHAT SHE'S MAKING.
CRACK CRACKLE CRACK
WHAT ARE YOU MAKING?
plop
EGG SALAD. WOULD YOU LIKE SOME?
MASH MASH
SURE.
MASH MASH
SURE.

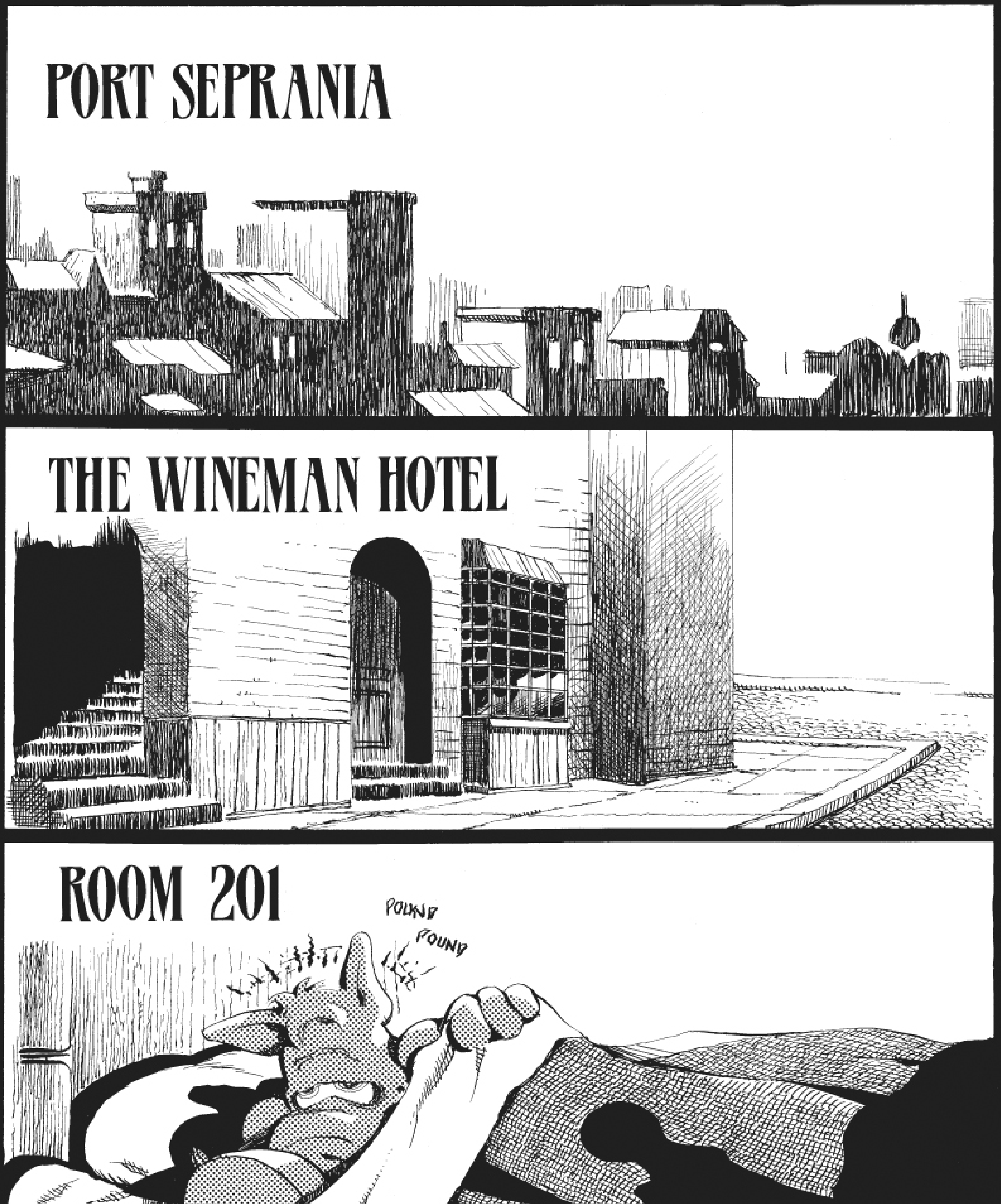

IT DIDN'T WORK.
THE GULLIBILITY OF MERE MORTALS NEVER CEASES TO ASTOUND.
YOU'VE BEEN TRICKED, MY DIM-WITTED YOUNG FRIEND -- HORNSWOGGLED, BAMBOOZLED, FLIM-FLAMMED...
HUH?
I LIED.
SHE WASN'T AFRAID OF LOSING CEREBUS?
YOU'RE JUST LUCKY SHE WASN'T STILL SLICING BREAD, WHEN YOU TOLD HER SHE COULD RUN THE KITCHEN.
YOU KNOW, FOR SOMEONE SO UTTERLY UNIQUE, YOU DISPLAY A SIMPLY APPALLING PENCHANT FOR MISPLACING YOUR LOYALTIES...
AND NOW YOU'RE DONE, AS THEY SAY, LIKE DINNER ...
YOU'VE LOST HER...
ACCEPT THAT.
GO BACK TO YOUR ORIGINAL IDEA ...
WHAT ORIGINAL IDEA?


STEALING THE *THOUSAND* CROWN BRIBE YOU TOLD HER YOU NEEDED TO GET A *DEFERRAL* ON HER PALNAN TAXES ...
GO AHEAD. IT WILL MAKE YOU FEEL BETTER ...
"A LITTLE REVENGE GOES GOOD WITH HARD TIMES."
ISN'T THAT WHAT YOUR FATHER USED TO SAY?
OH.
THAT IDEA.
CHEER UP. YOU'RE THREE FEET TALL, YOU LOOK ABOUT FIVE YEARS OLD, YOU HAVE THE *DEMEANOR* OF AN *ORPHANED PUPPY* AND A NEED FOR A *MOTHER-SUBSTITUTE* UPON WHICH I COULD FLOAT *HIS HOLINESS'* TRADING FLEET ...
YOU'LL FIND SOMEONE *ELSE* IN *NO TIME*...
WELL, ...uh...
TRUST ME, I'M...
JUST *TRUST* ME...

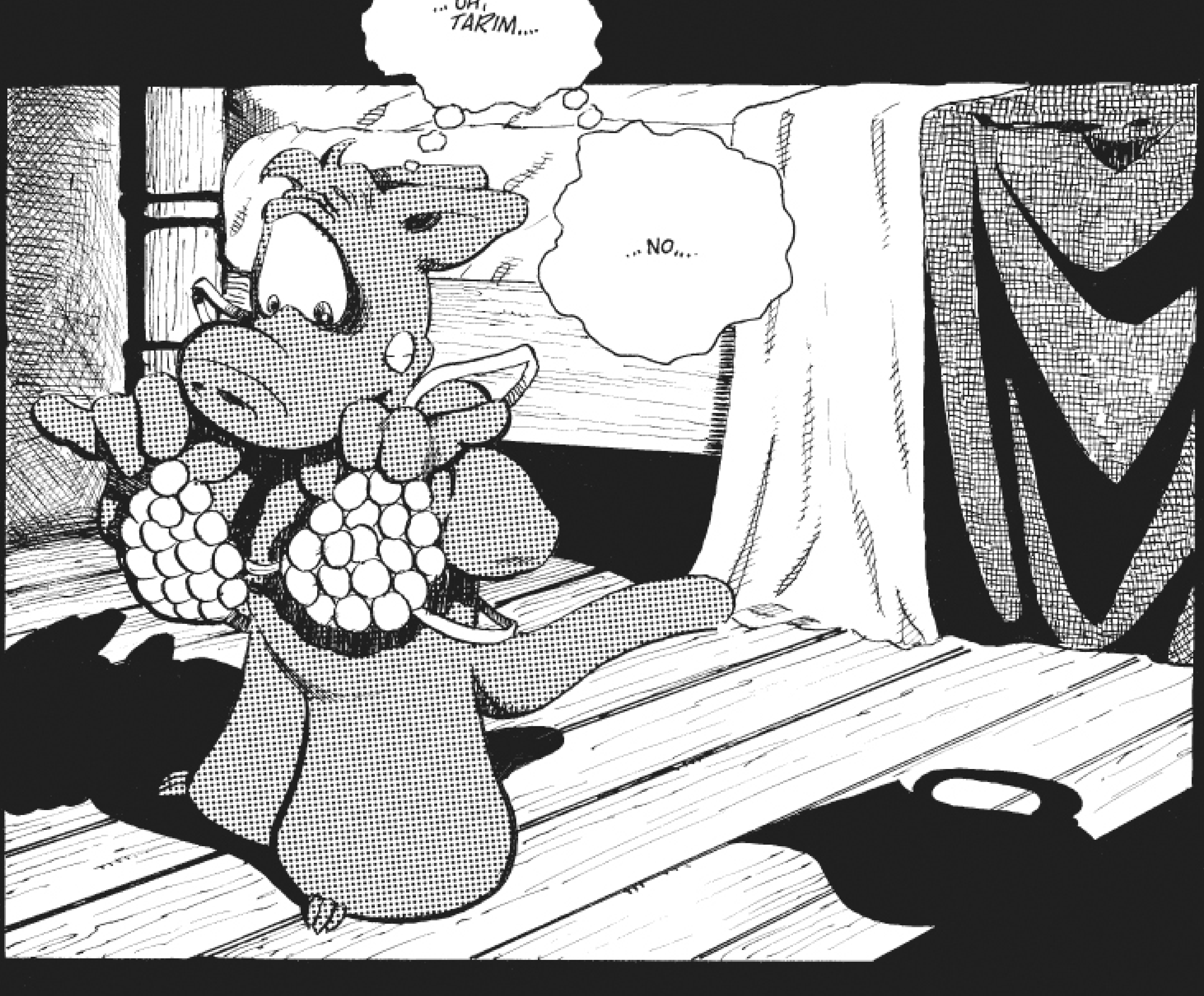

YOU CAN STOP LOOKING AT ME THAT WAY...
I DON'T FEEL SORRY FOR YOU...

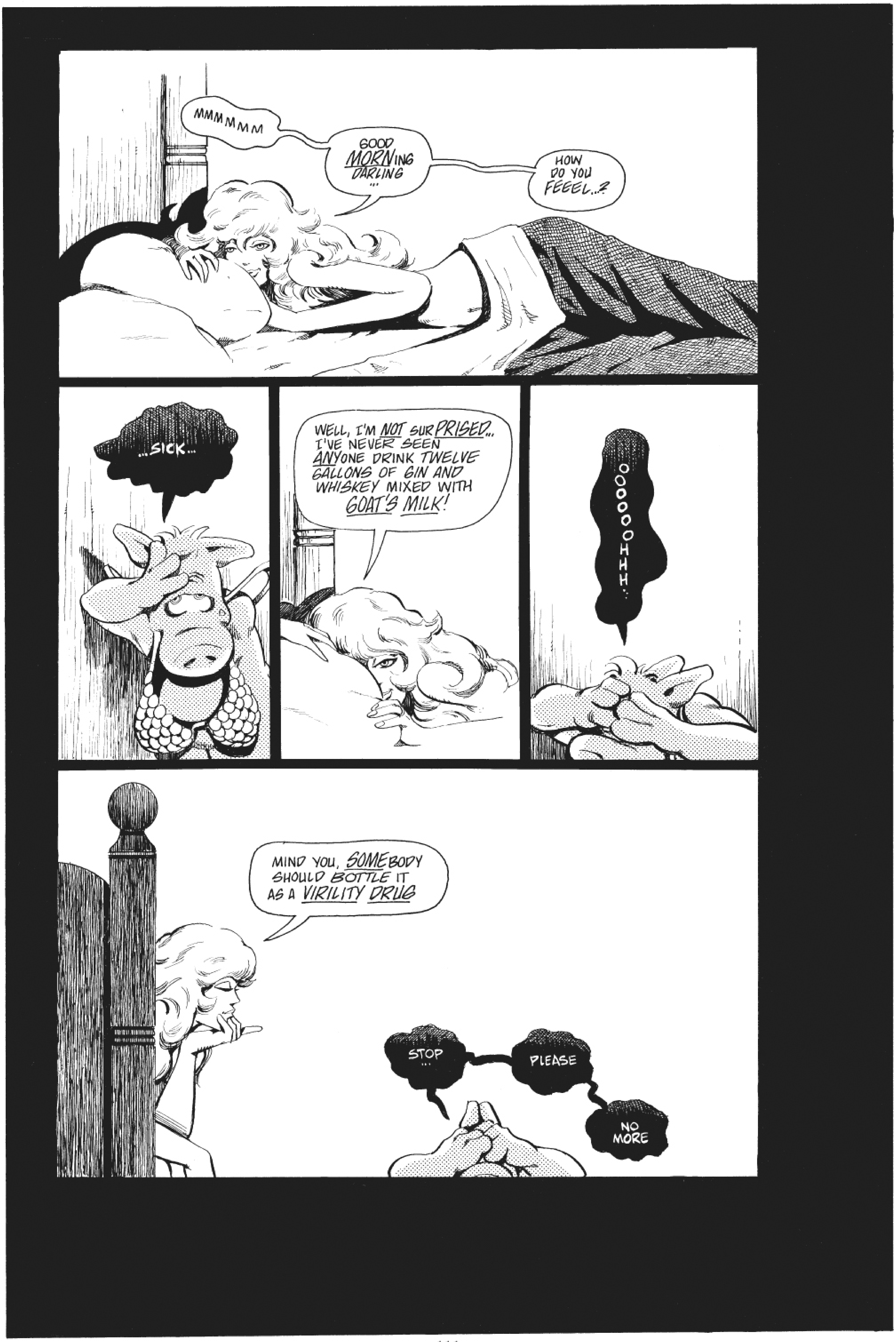

HERE'S THE THOUSAND CROWNS ...
FLOP
COURIER'S POUCH--JUST LIKE YOU SAID...
JUST TO SAVE YOU THE TROUBLE OF CUTTING IT OPEN...
...HERE'S THE KEY...
PING
PING

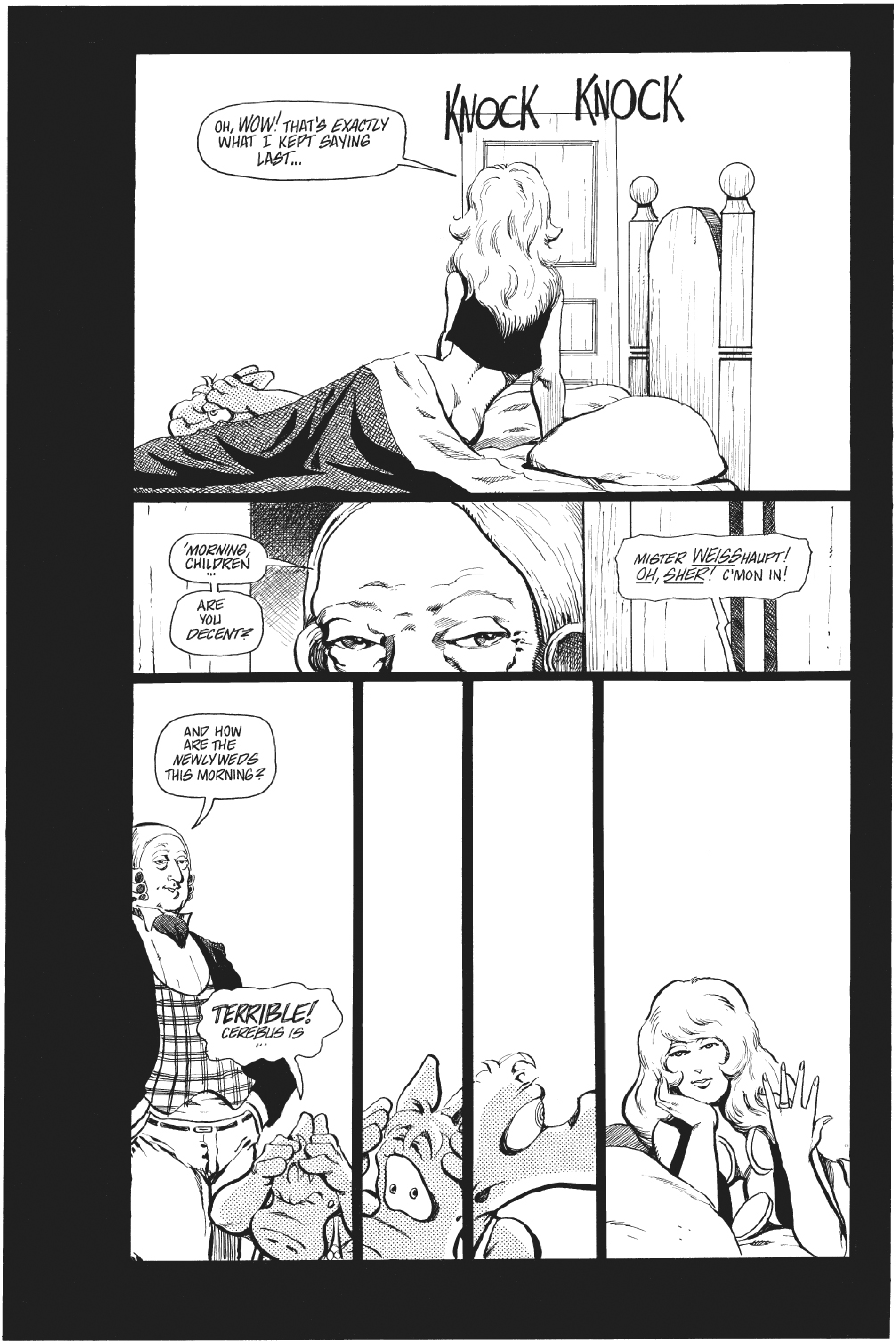

SLAM
NEXT:
"UNREQUITED INFATUATION"
or
"The After-Effects of Stealing From Widows"

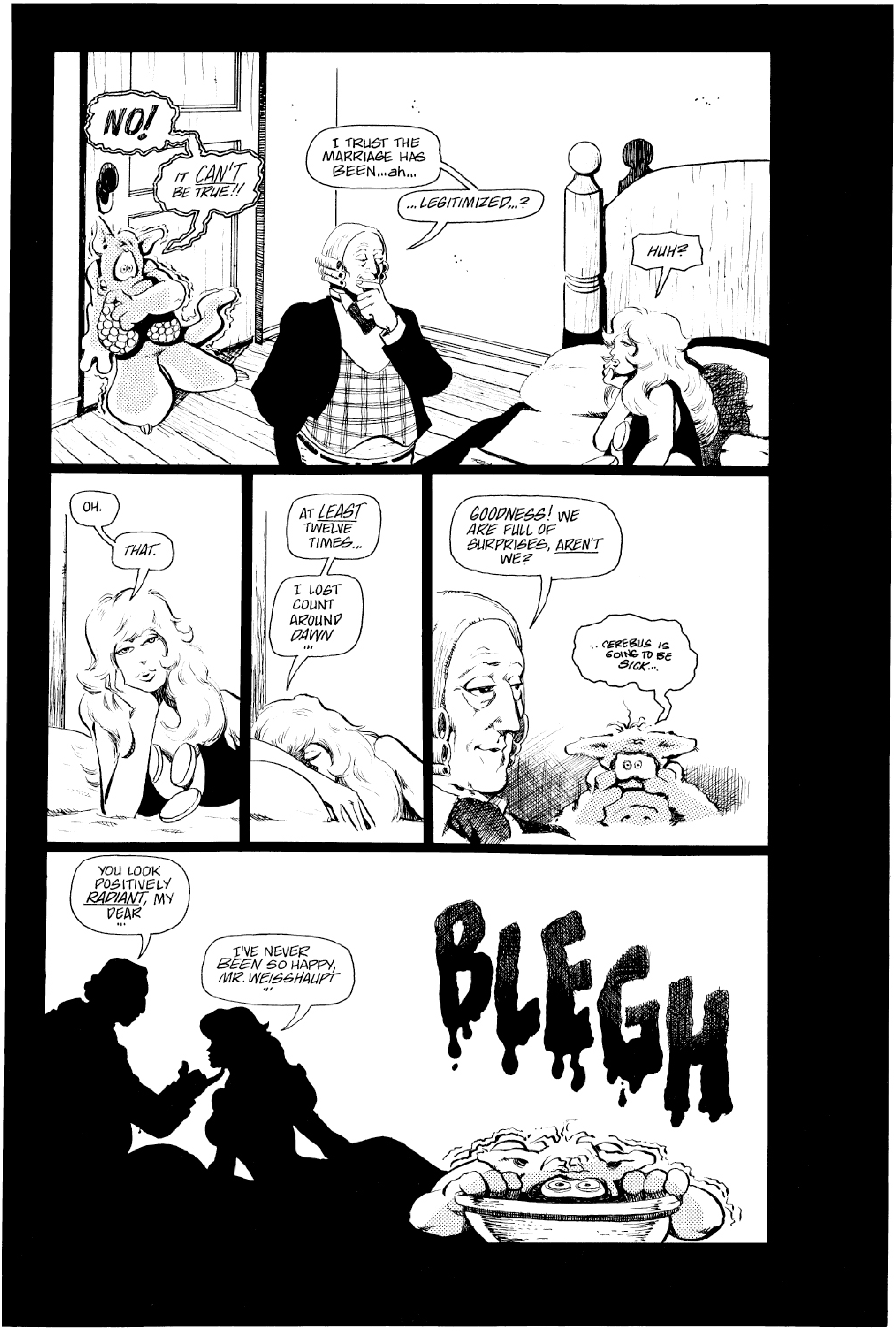

PORT SEPRANIA
THE WINEMAN HOTEL
ROOM 201
POUND
POUND
CHING!
CHING?

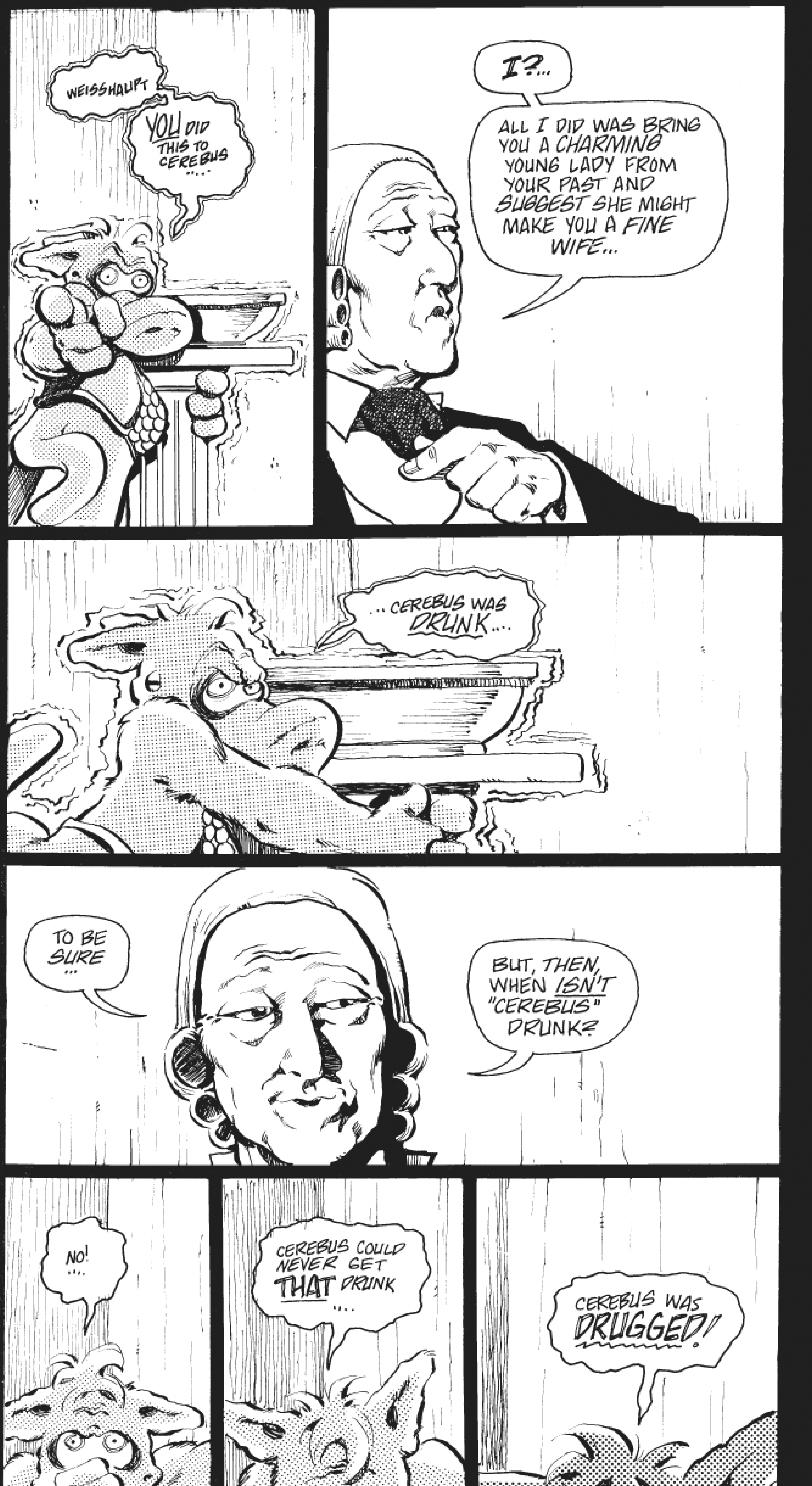
SUDDENLY SOPHIA

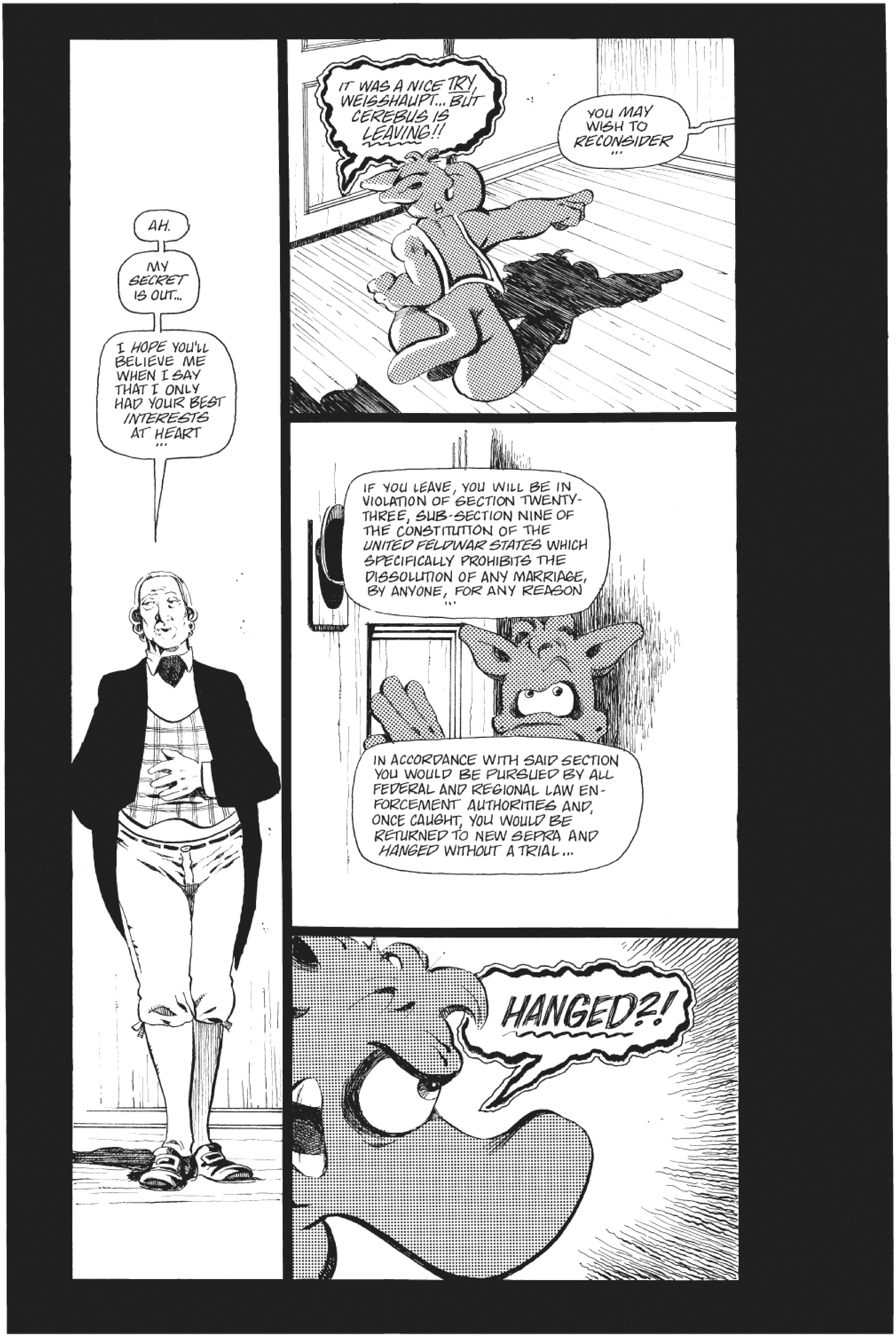


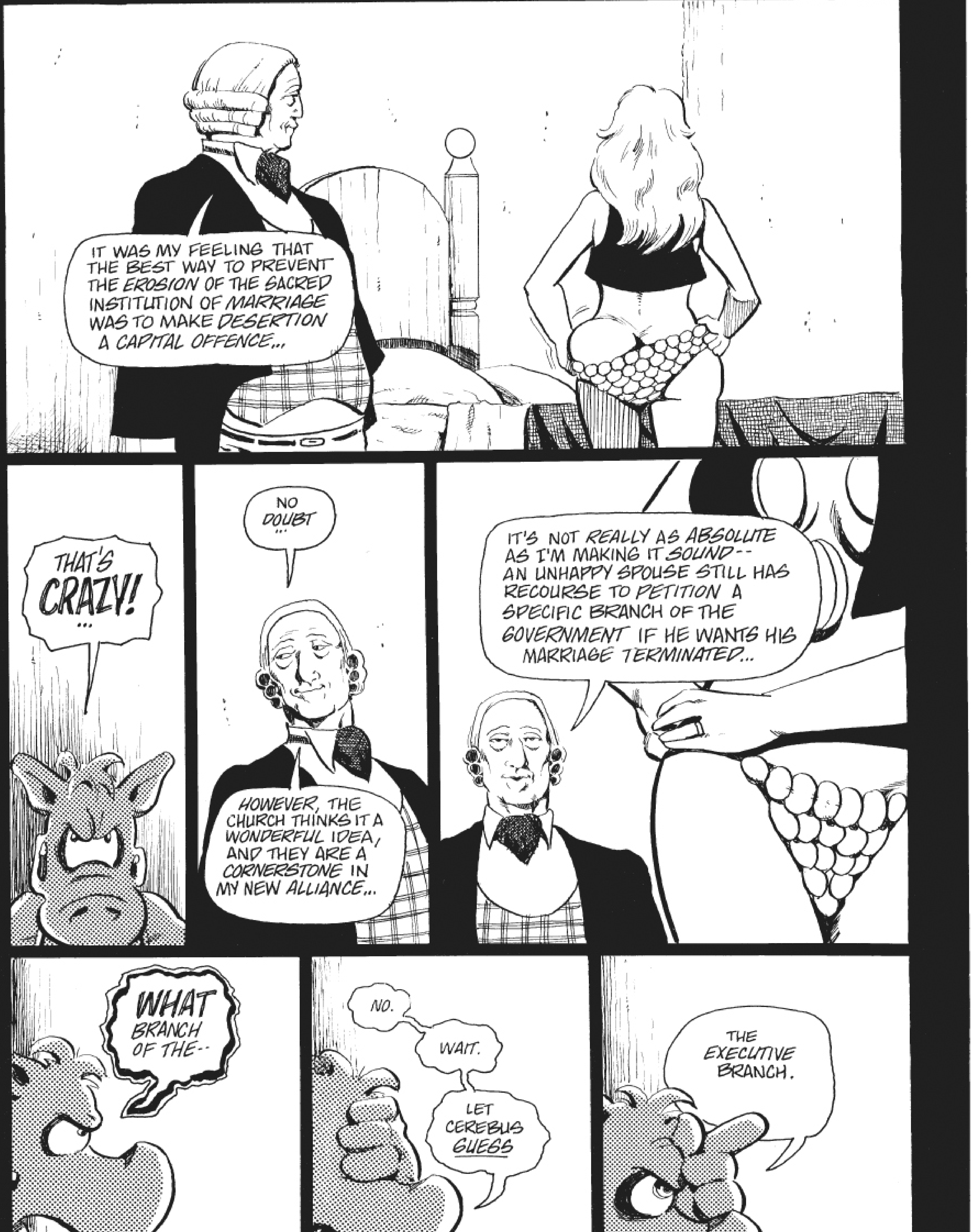

MMMMMM
GOOD MORNING DARLING ...
HOW DO YOU FEEEL..?
...SICK...
WELL, I'M NOT SURPRISED... I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYONE DRINK TWELVE GALLONS OF GIN AND WHISKEY MIXED WITH GOAT'S MILK!
OOOOOOOHHH..
MIND YOU, SOMEBODY SHOULD BOTTLE IT AS A VIRILITY DRUG
STOP ...
PLEASE
NO MORE

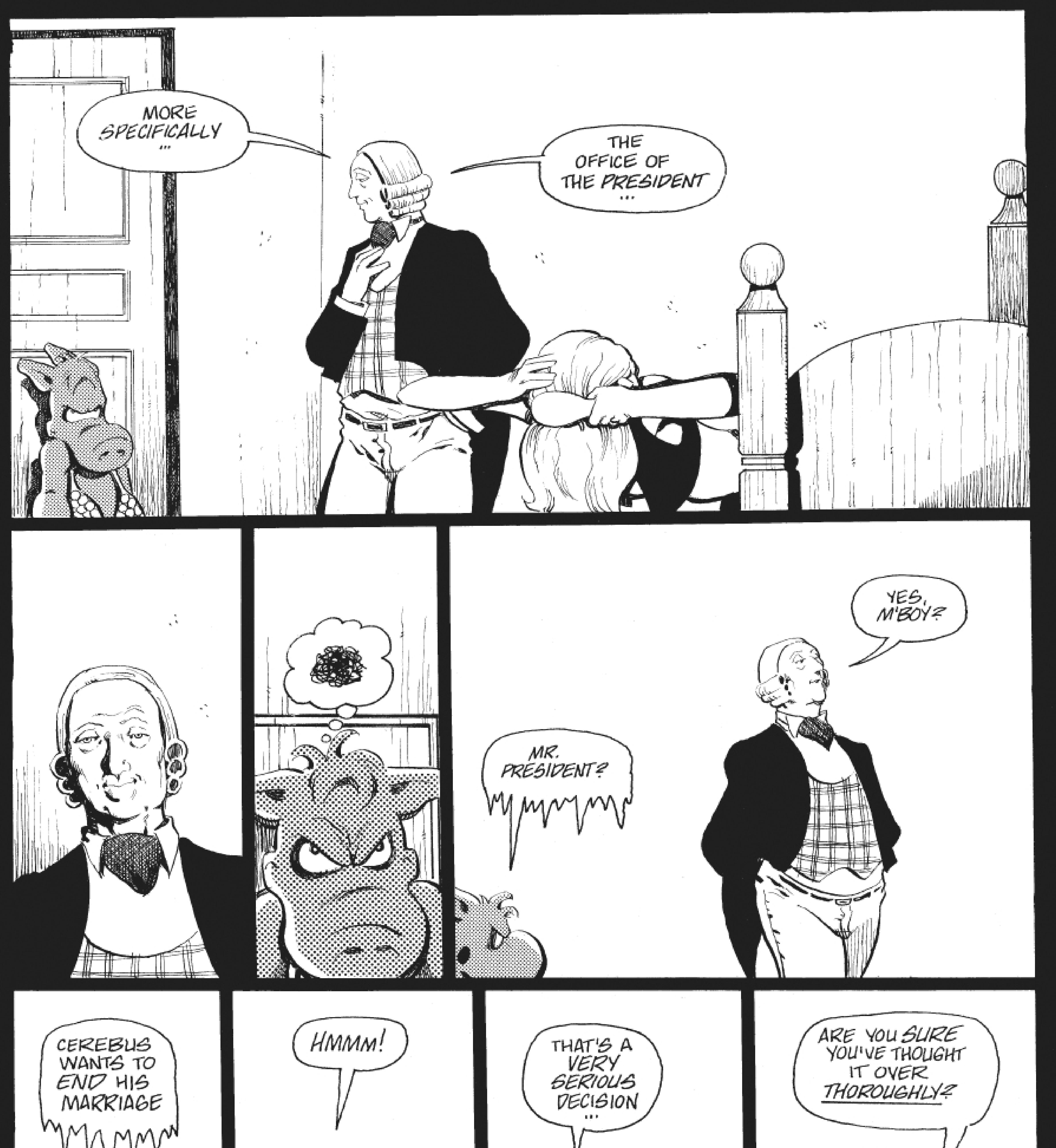

KNOCK KNOCK
OH, WOW! THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT I KEPT SAYING LAST...
'MORNING, CHILDREN ...
ARE YOU DECENT?
MISTER WEISSHAUPT! OH, SHER! C'MON IN!
AND HOW ARE THE NEWLYWEDS THIS MORNING?
TERRIBLE! CEREBUS IS ...

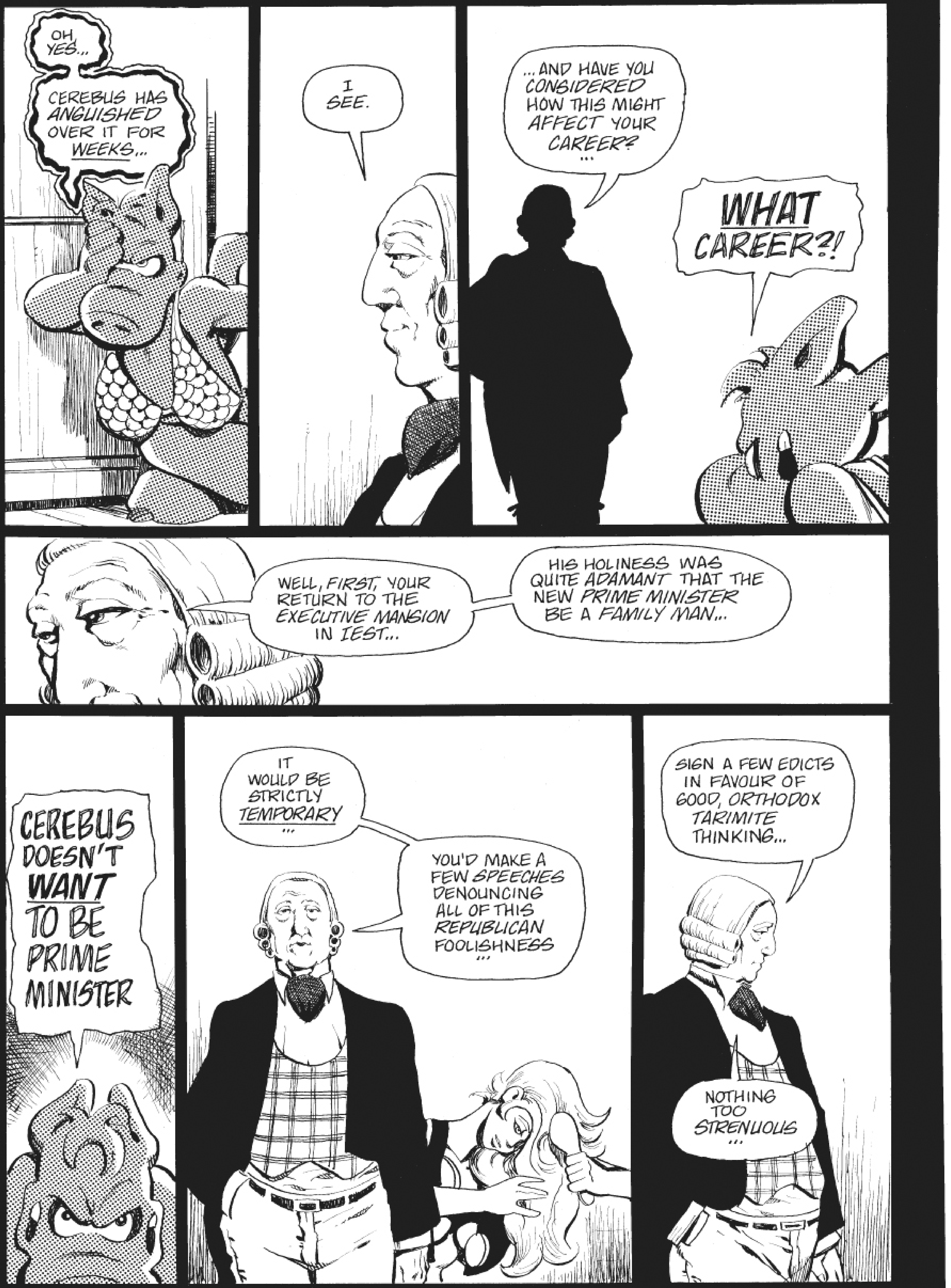

NO!
IT CAN'T BE TRUE!!
I TRUST THE MARRIAGE HAS BEEN...ah...
...LEGITIMIZED...?
HUH?
OH.
THAT.
AT LEAST TWELVE TIMES...
I LOST COUNT AROUND DAWN...
GOODNESS! WE ARE FULL OF SURPRISES, AREN'T WE?
..CEREBUS IS GOING TO BE SICK...
YOU LOOK POSITIVELY RADIANT, MY DEAR...
I'VE NEVER BEEN SO HAPPY, MR. WEISSHAUPT...
BLEGH

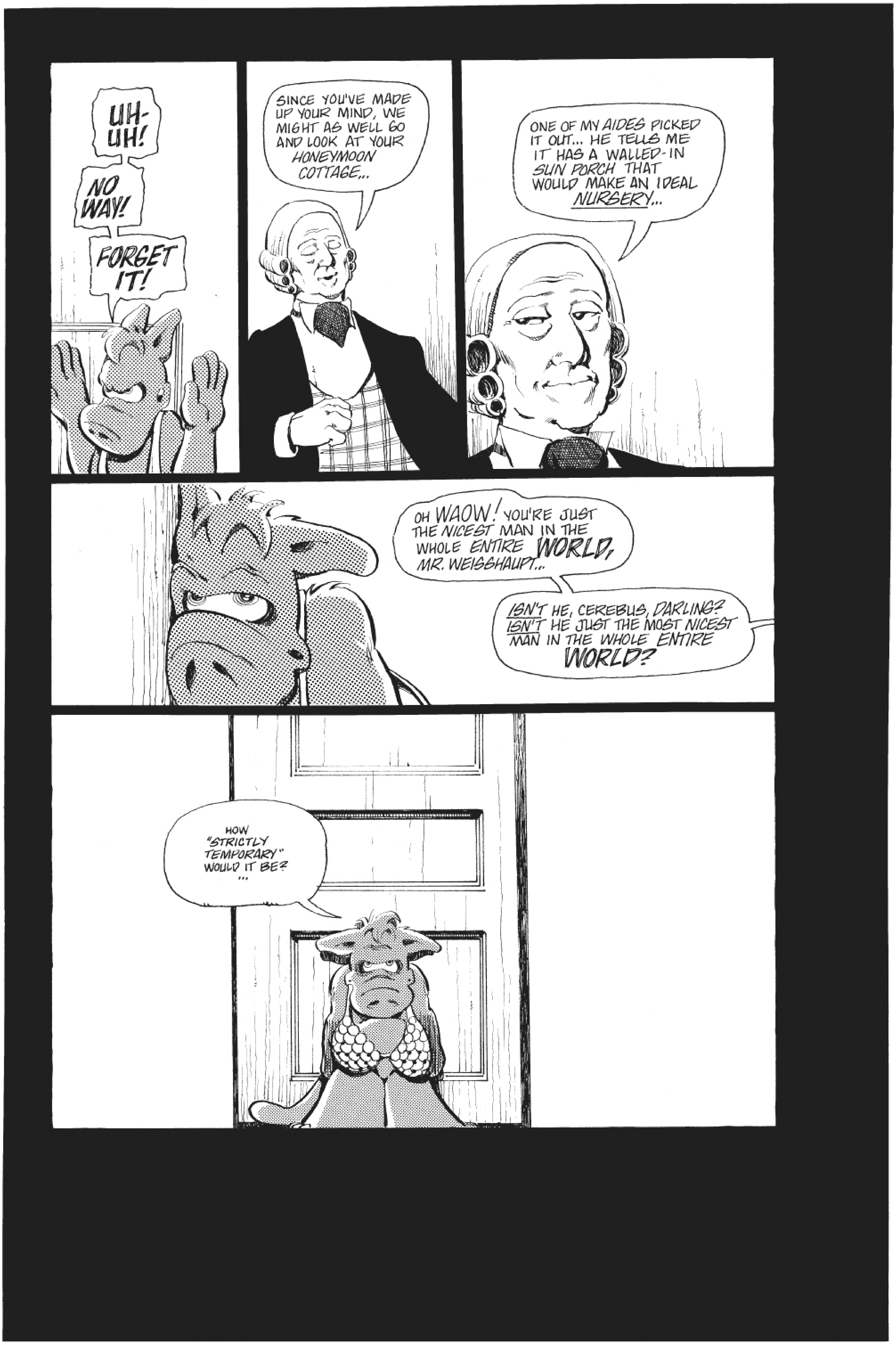

WEISSHAUPT
YOU DID THIS TO CEREBUS ...
I?...
ALL I DID WAS BRING YOU A CHARMING YOUNG LADY FROM YOUR PAST AND SUGGEST SHE MIGHT MAKE YOU A FINE WIFE...
...CEREBUS WAS DRUNK....
TO BE SURE ...
BUT, THEN, WHEN ISN'T "CEREBUS" DRUNK?
NO! ...
CEREBUS COULD NEVER GET THAT DRUNK ....
CEREBUS WAS DRUGGED!

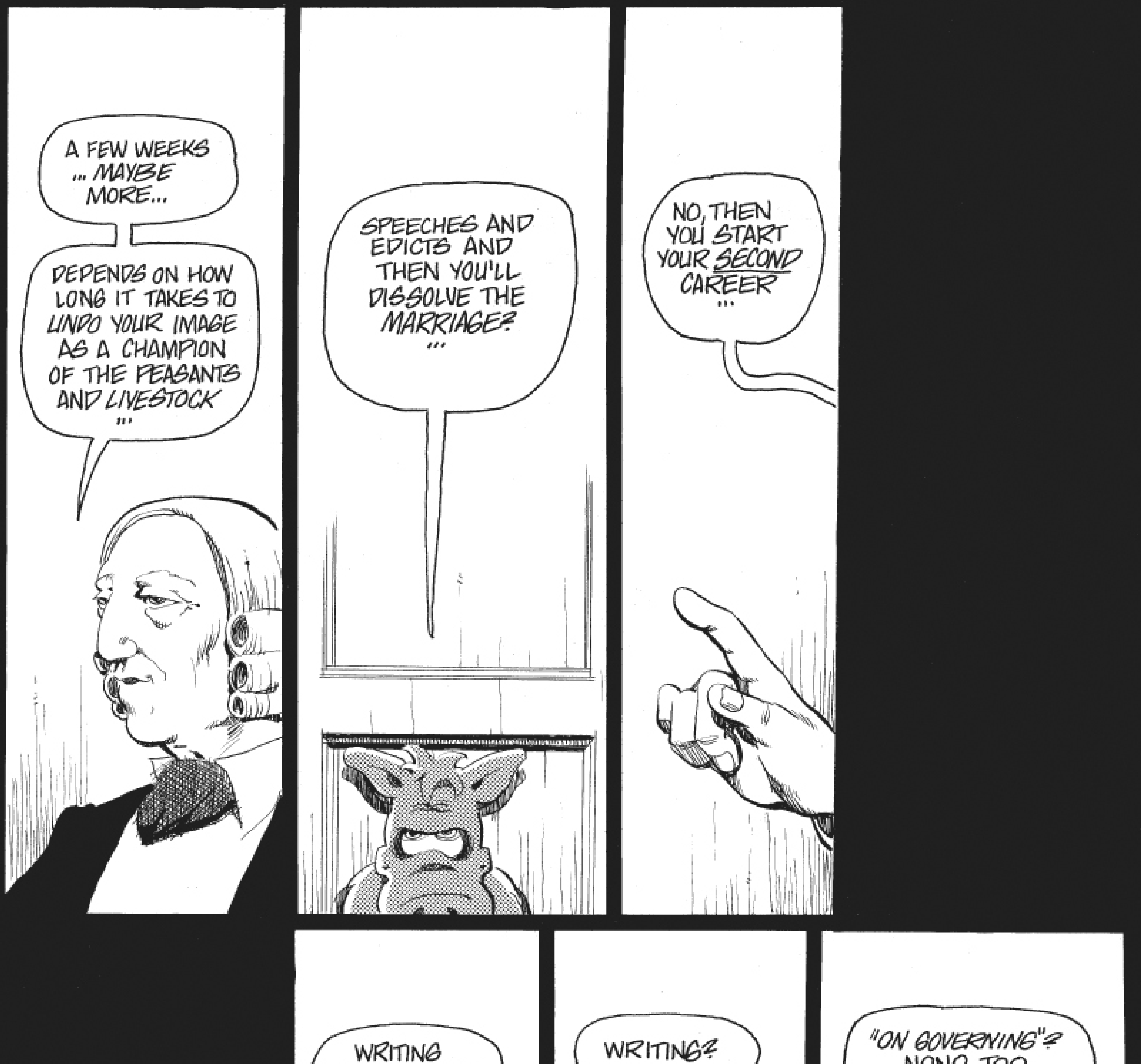

AH.
MY SECRET IS OUT...
I HOPE YOU'LL BELIEVE ME WHEN I SAY THAT I ONLY HAD YOUR BEST INTERESTS AT HEART ...
IT WAS A NICE TRY, WEISSHAUPT... BUT CEREBUS IS LEAVING!!
YOU MAY WISH TO RECONSIDER ...
IF YOU LEAVE, YOU WILL BE IN VIOLATION OF SECTION TWENTY-THREE, SUB-SECTION NINE OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED FELDWAR STATES WHICH SPECIFICALLY PROHIBITS THE DISSOLUTION OF ANY MARRIAGE, BY ANYONE, FOR ANY REASON ...
IN ACCORDANCE WITH SAID SECTION YOU WOULD BE PURSUED BY ALL FEDERAL AND REGIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AUTHORITIES AND, ONCE CAUGHT, YOU WOULD BE RETURNED TO NEW SEPRA AND HANGED WITHOUT A TRIAL ...
HANGED?!

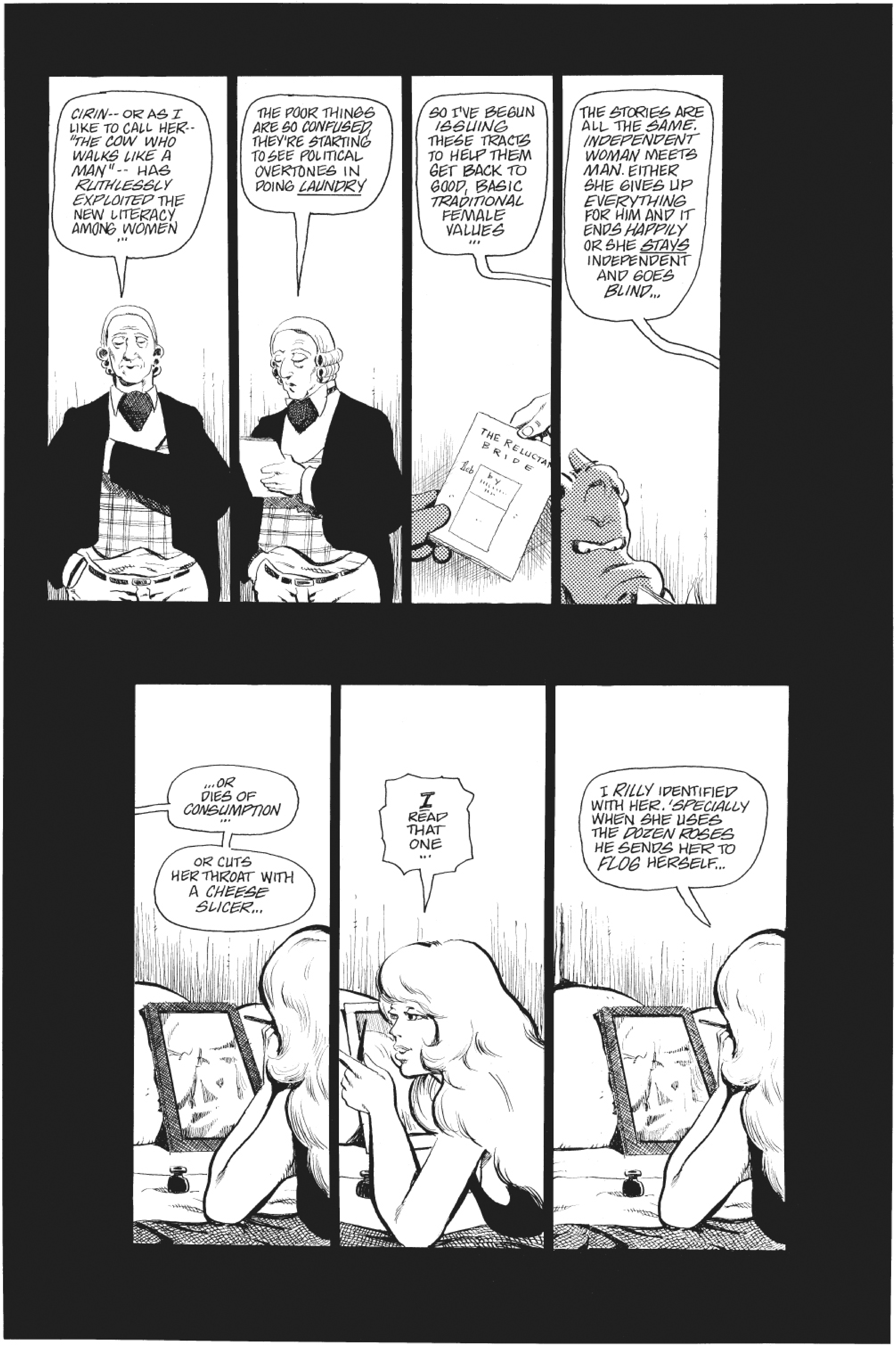

IT WAS MY FEELING THAT THE BEST WAY TO PREVENT THE *EROSION* OF THE SACRED INSTITUTION OF *MARRIAGE* WAS TO MAKE *DESERTION* A CAPITAL OFFENCE...
THAT'S **CRAZY!** ...
NO *DOUBT* ...
HOWEVER, THE CHURCH THINKS IT A *WONDERFUL IDEA*, AND THEY ARE A *CORNERSTONE* IN *MY NEW ALLIANCE*...
IT'S NOT *REALLY* AS *ABSOLUTE* AS I'M MAKING IT *SOUND*-- AN UNHAPPY SPOUSE STILL HAS RECOURSE TO *PETITION* A SPECIFIC BRANCH OF THE *GOVERNMENT* IF HE WANTS HIS MARRIAGE *TERMINATED*...
WHAT BRANCH OF THE--
NO.
WAIT.
LET CEREBUS GUESS
THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH.

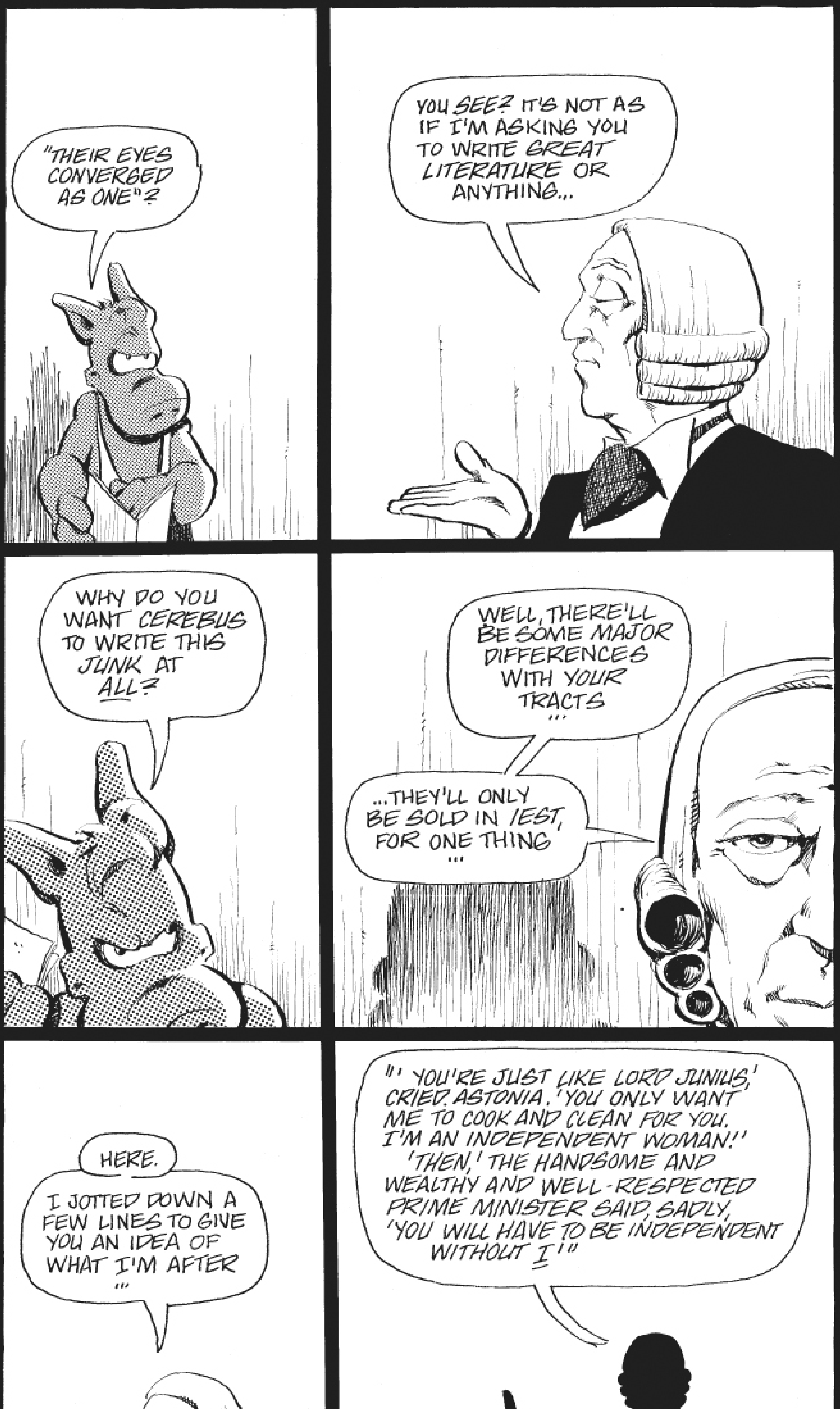

MORE SPECIFICALLY ...
THE OFFICE OF THE *PRESIDENT* ...
MR. PRESIDENT?
YES, M'BOY?
CEREBUS WANTS TO *END* HIS MARRIAGE
HMMM!
THAT'S A *VERY SERIOUS* DECISION ...
ARE YOU *SURE* YOU'VE THOUGHT IT OVER *THOROUGHLY?*

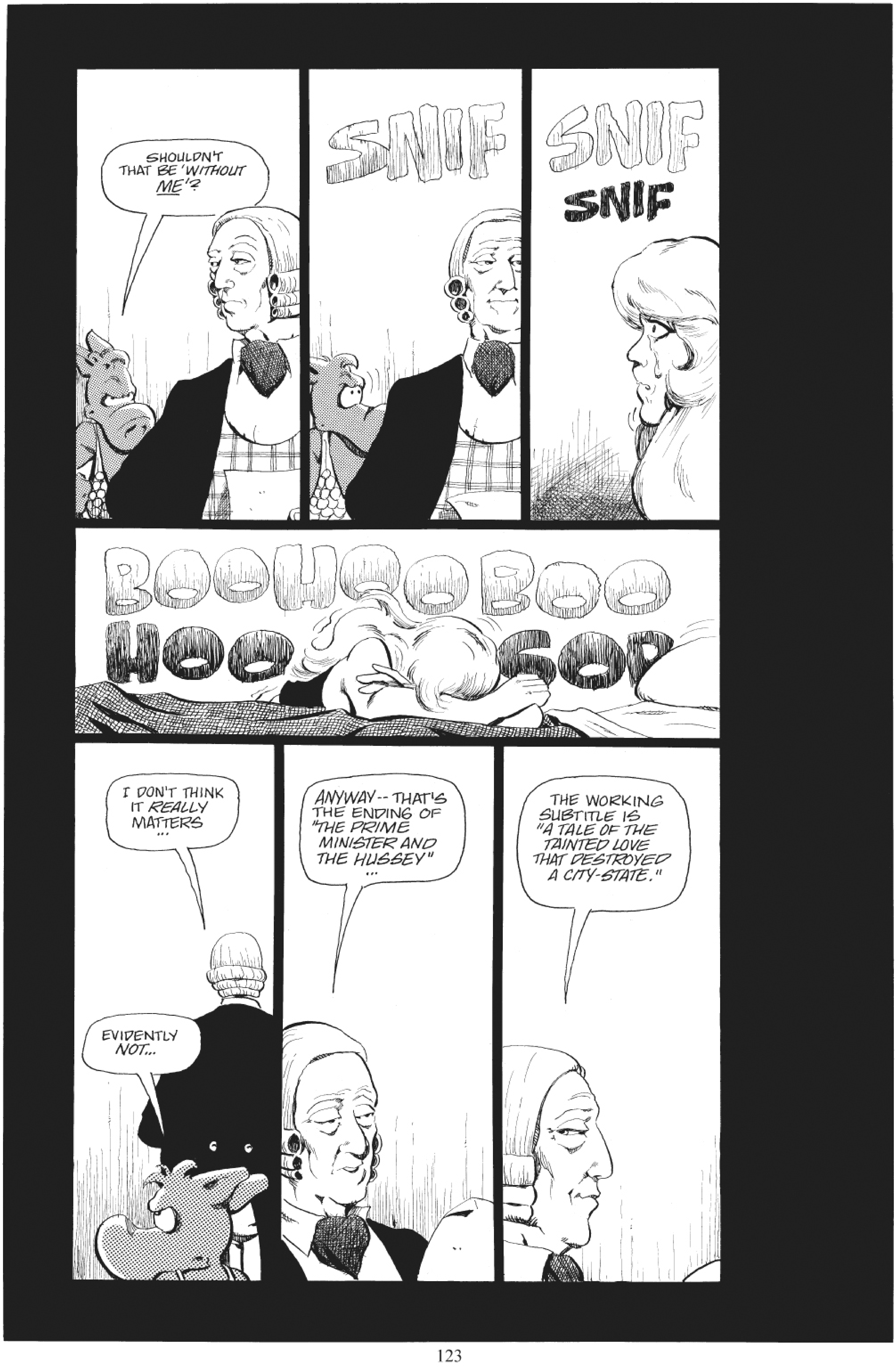

OH, YES...
CEREBUS HAS ANGUISHED OVER IT FOR WEEKS...
I SEE.
...AND HAVE YOU CONSIDERED HOW THIS MIGHT AFFECT YOUR CAREER? ...
WHAT CAREER?!
WELL, FIRST, YOUR RETURN TO THE EXECUTIVE MANSION IN IEST...
HIS HOLINESS WAS QUITE ADAMANT THAT THE NEW PRIME MINISTER BE A FAMILY MAN...
CEREBUS DOESN'T WANT TO BE PRIME MINISTER
IT WOULD BE STRICTLY TEMPORARY ...
YOU'D MAKE A FEW SPEECHES DENOUNCING ALL OF THIS REPUBLICAN FOOLISHNESS ...
SIGN A FEW EDICTS IN FAVOUR OF GOOD, ORTHODOX TARIMITE THINKING...
NOTHING TOO STRENUOUS ...

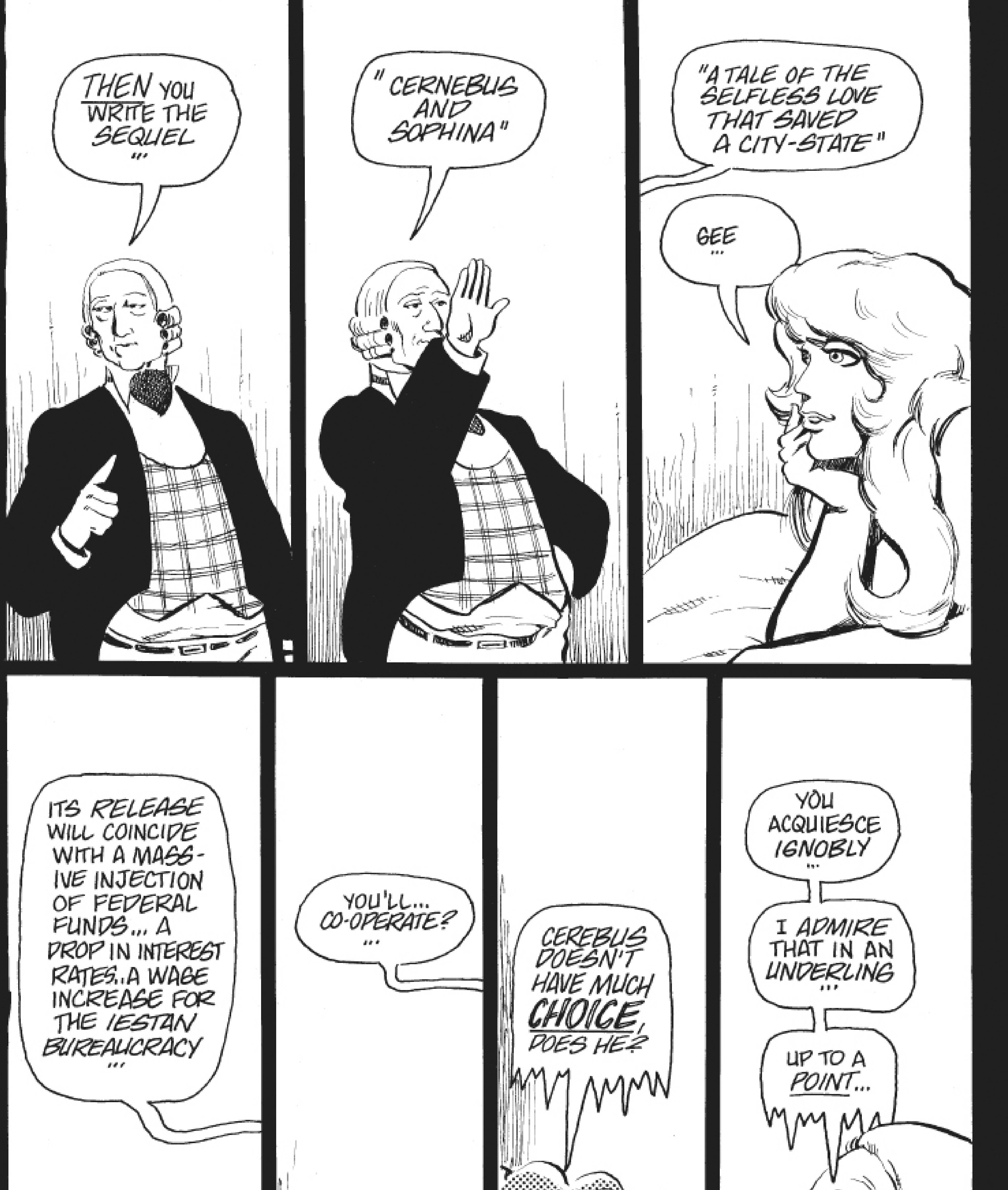

UH-UH!
NO WAY!
FORGET IT!
SINCE YOU'VE MADE UP YOUR MIND, WE MIGHT AS WELL GO AND LOOK AT YOUR *HONEYMOON COTTAGE*...
ONE OF MY *AIDES* PICKED IT OUT... HE TELLS ME IT HAS A WALLED-IN *SUN PORCH* THAT WOULD MAKE AN IDEAL *NURSERY*...
OH *WAOW!* YOU'RE JUST THE *NICEST* MAN IN THE WHOLE *ENTIRE* *WORLD,* MR. WEISSHAUPT...
ISN'T HE, CEREBUS, *DARLING?* *ISN'T* HE JUST THE MOST *NICEST* *MAN* IN THE WHOLE *ENTIRE* *WORLD?*
HOW "STRICTLY TEMPORARY" WOULD IT BE? ...

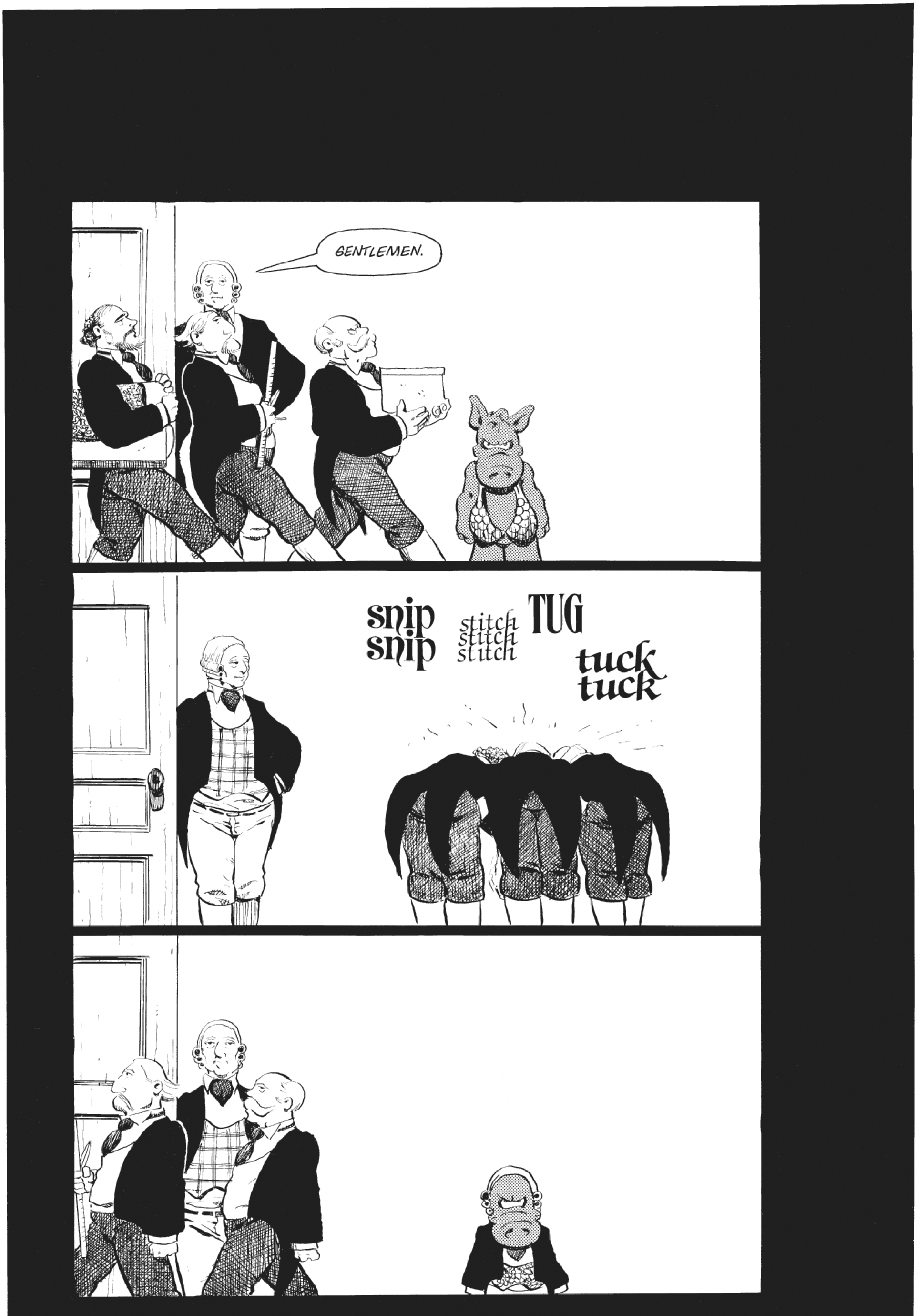

A FEW WEEKS ... *MAYBE* MORE...
DEPENDS ON HOW LONG IT TAKES TO *UNDO* YOUR IMAGE AS A CHAMPION OF THE PEASANTS AND *LIVESTOCK* ...
SPEECHES AND EDICTS AND THEN YOU'LL DISSOLVE THE *MARRIAGE?* ...
NO, THEN YOU *START* YOUR *SECOND* CAREER ...
WRITING STORIES FOR ME TO PUBLISH ...
WRITING?
YOU MEAN *CEREBUS'* BOOK?
"ON GOVERNING"? NONO. TOO *PROVOCATIVE*. WHAT I WANT ARE *ROMANCE TRACTS* ...

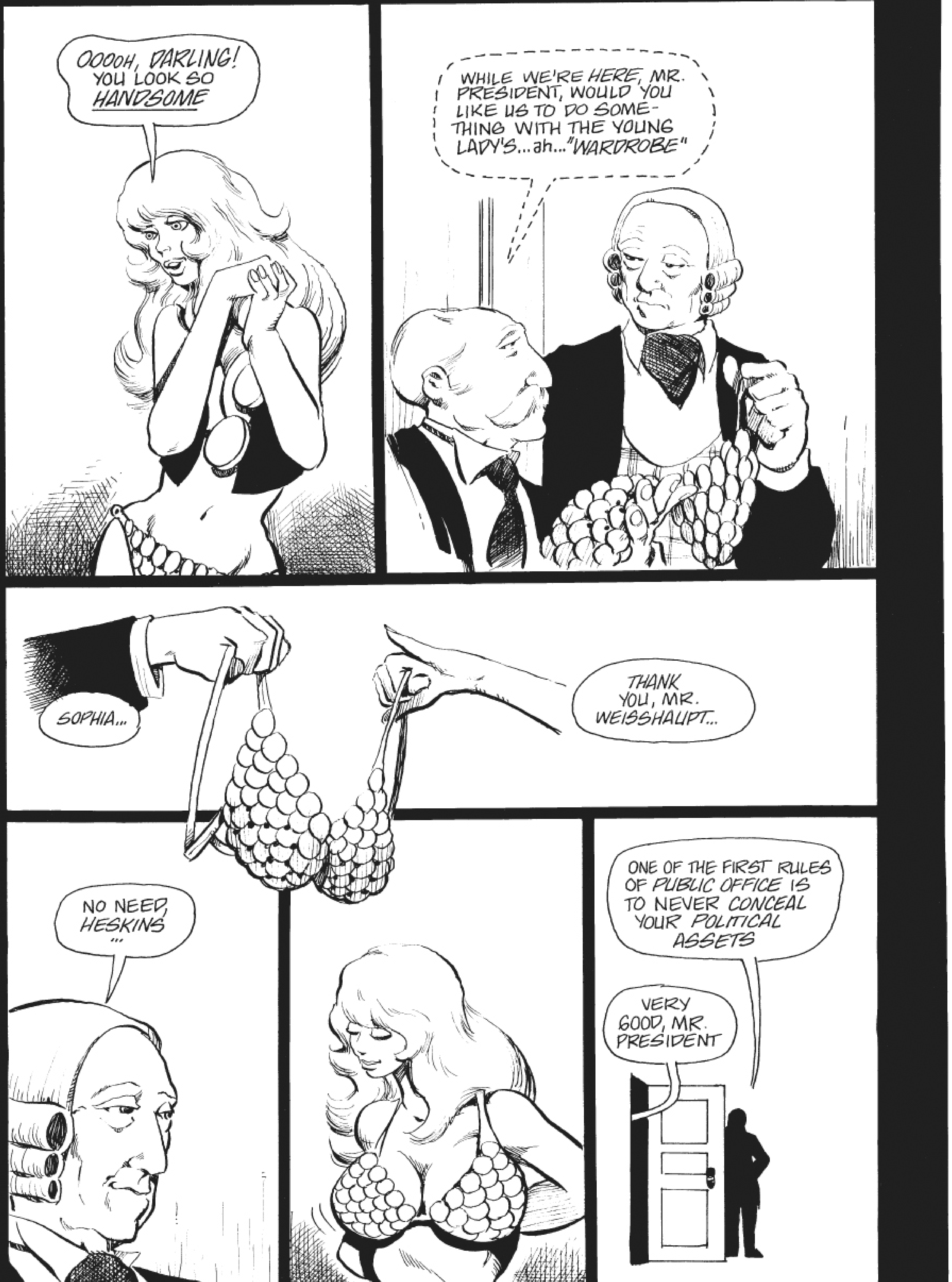

CIRIN-- OR AS I LIKE TO CALL HER-- "THE COW WHO WALKS LIKE A MAN"-- HAS RUTHLESSLY EXPLOITED THE NEW LITERACY AMONG WOMEN ...
THE POOR THINGS ARE SO CONFUSED, THEY'RE STARTING TO SEE POLITICAL OVERTONES IN DOING LAUNDRY
SO I'VE BEGUN ISSUING THESE TRACTS TO HELP THEM GET BACK TO GOOD, BASIC TRADITIONAL FEMALE VALUES ...
THE RELUCTAN BRIDE
THE STORIES ARE ALL THE SAME. INDEPENDENT WOMAN MEETS MAN. EITHER SHE GIVES UP EVERYTHING FOR HIM AND IT ENDS HAPPILY OR SHE STAYS INDEPENDENT AND GOES BLIND...
...OR DIES OF CONSUMPTION ...
OR CUTS HER THROAT WITH A CHEESE SLICER...
I READ THAT ONE ...
I RILLY IDENTIFIED WITH HER. 'SPECIALLY WHEN SHE USES THE DOZEN ROSES HE SENDS HER TO FLOG HERSELF...

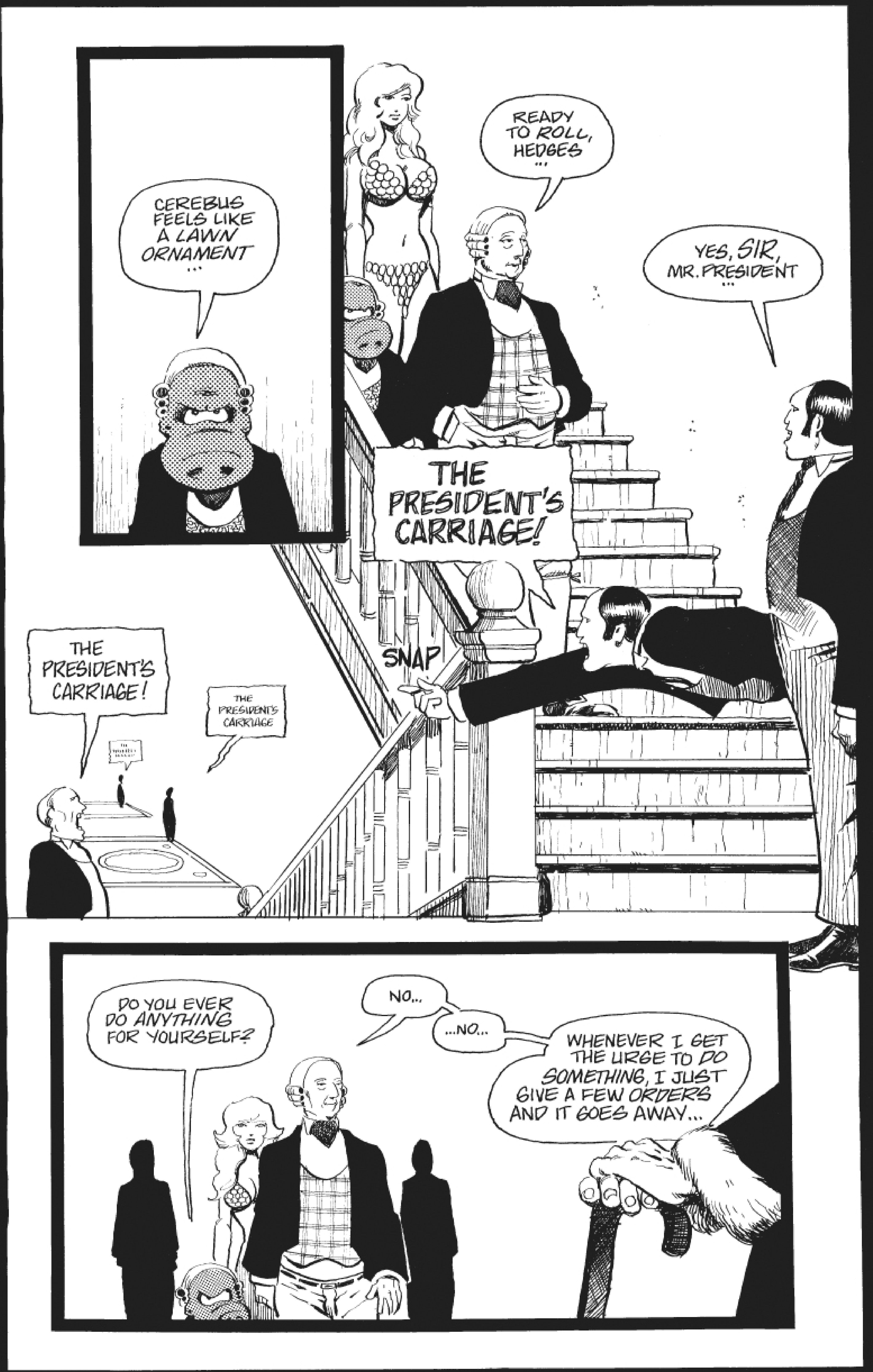

"THEIR EYES CONVERGED AS ONE"?
YOU SEE? IT'S NOT AS IF I'M ASKING YOU TO WRITE GREAT LITERATURE OR ANYTHING...
WHY DO YOU WANT CEREBUS TO WRITE THIS JUNK AT ALL?
WELL, THERE'LL BE SOME MAJOR DIFFERENCES WITH YOUR TRACTS ...
...THEY'LL ONLY BE SOLD IN IEST, FOR ONE THING ...
HERE.
I JOTTED DOWN A FEW LINES TO GIVE YOU AN IDEA OF WHAT I'M AFTER ...
"'YOU'RE JUST LIKE LORD JUNIUS,' CRIED ASTONIA. 'YOU ONLY WANT ME TO COOK AND CLEAN FOR YOU. I'M AN INDEPENDENT WOMAN!' 'THEN,' THE HANDSOME AND WEALTHY AND WELL-RESPECTED PRIME MINISTER SAID, SADLY, 'YOU WILL HAVE TO BE INDEPENDENT WITHOUT I!'"

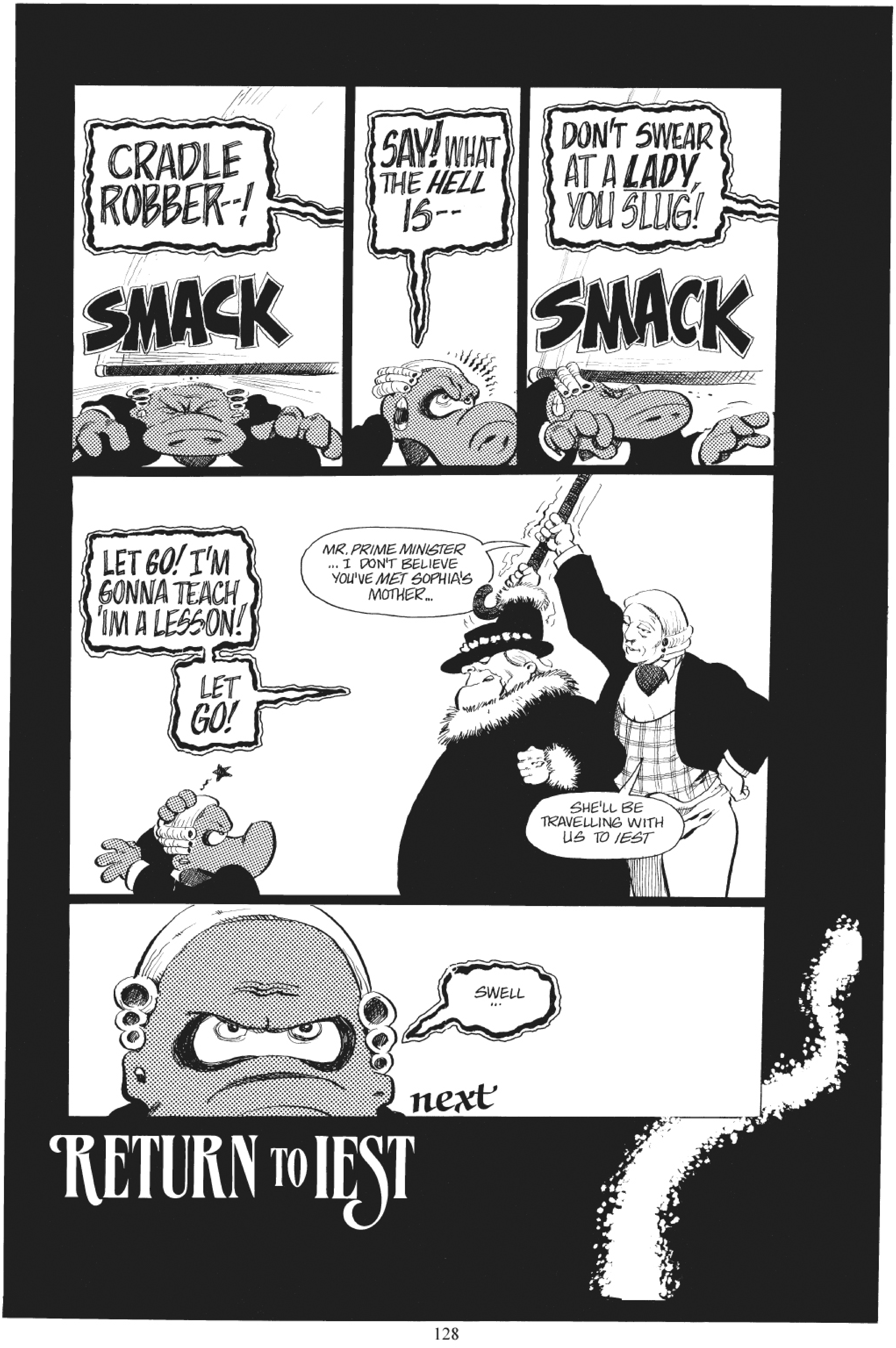

SHOULDN'T THAT BE 'WITHOUT ME'?
SNIF
SNIF
SNIF
BOOHOO BOO HOO HOO GOD
I DON'T THINK IT REALLY MATTERS ...
EVIDENTLY NOT...
ANYWAY-- THAT'S THE ENDING OF "THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE HUSSEY" ...
THE WORKING SUBTITLE IS "A TALE OF THE TAINTED LOVE THAT DESTROYED A CITY-STATE."


THEN YOU WRITE THE SEQUEL ...
" CERNEBUS AND SOPHINA "
"A TALE OF THE SELFLESS LOVE THAT SAVED A CITY-STATE"
GEE ...
ITS RELEASE WILL COINCIDE WITH A MASSIVE INJECTION OF FEDERAL FUNDS... A DROP IN INTEREST RATES.. A WAGE INCREASE FOR THE IESTAN BUREAUCRACY ...
YOU'LL... CO-OPERATE? ...
CEREBUS DOESN'T HAVE MUCH CHOICE, DOES HE?
YOU ACQUIESCE IGNOBLY ...
I ADMIRE THAT IN AN UNDERLING ...
UP TO A POINT...


GENTLEMEN.
snip snip
stitch stitch stitch
TUG
tuck tuck

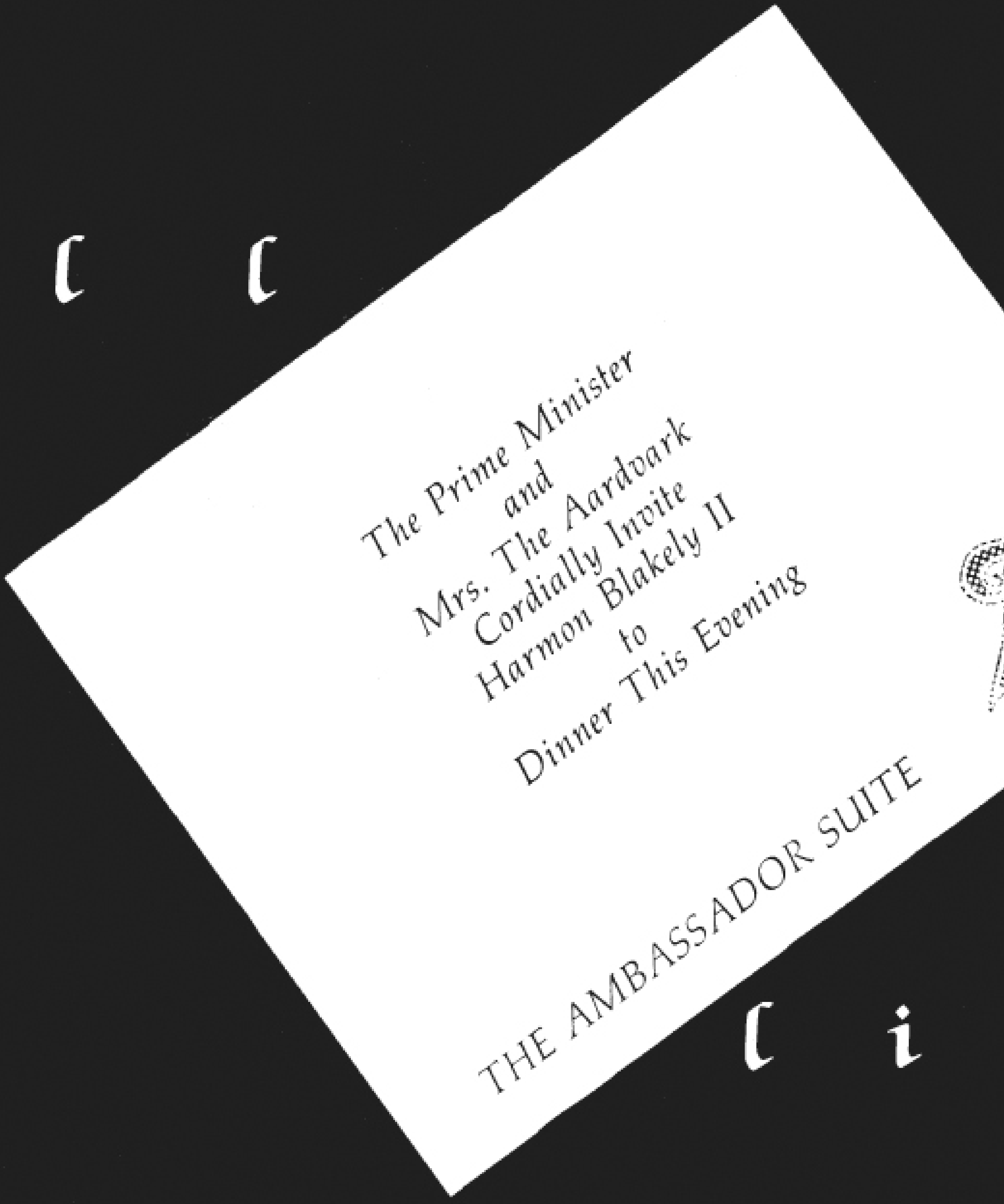

OOOoH, DARLING! YOU LOOK SO *HANDSOME*
WHILE WE'RE *HERE*, MR. PRESIDENT, WOULD YOU LIKE US TO DO SOMETHING WITH THE YOUNG LADY'S...ah..."*WARDROBE*"
SOPHIA...
THANK YOU, MR. WEISSHAUPT...
NO NEED, *HESKINS* ...
ONE OF THE FIRST RULES OF *PUBLIC OFFICE* IS TO NEVER *CONCEAL* YOUR *POLITICAL* ASSETS
VERY GOOD, MR. PRESIDENT


CEREBUS FEELS LIKE A LAWN ORNAMENT ...
READY TO ROLL, HEDGES ...
YES, SIR, MR. PRESIDENT ...
THE PRESIDENT'S CARRIAGE!
SNAP
THE PRESIDENT'S CARRIAGE!
THE PRESIDENT'S CARRIAGE
DO YOU EVER DO ANYTHING FOR YOURSELF?
NO...
...NO...
WHENEVER I GET THE URGE TO DO SOMETHING, I JUST GIVE A FEW ORDERS AND IT GOES AWAY...


CRADLE ROBBER--!
SMACK
SAY! WHAT THE HELL IS--
DON'T SWEAR AT A LADY, YOU SLUG!
SMACK
LET GO! I'M GONNA TEACH 'IM A LESSON!
LET GO!
MR. PRIME MINISTER ... I DON'T BELIEVE YOU'VE MET SOPHIA'S MOTHER...
SHE'LL BE TRAVELLING WITH US TO IEST
SWELL ...
next
RETURN TO IEST

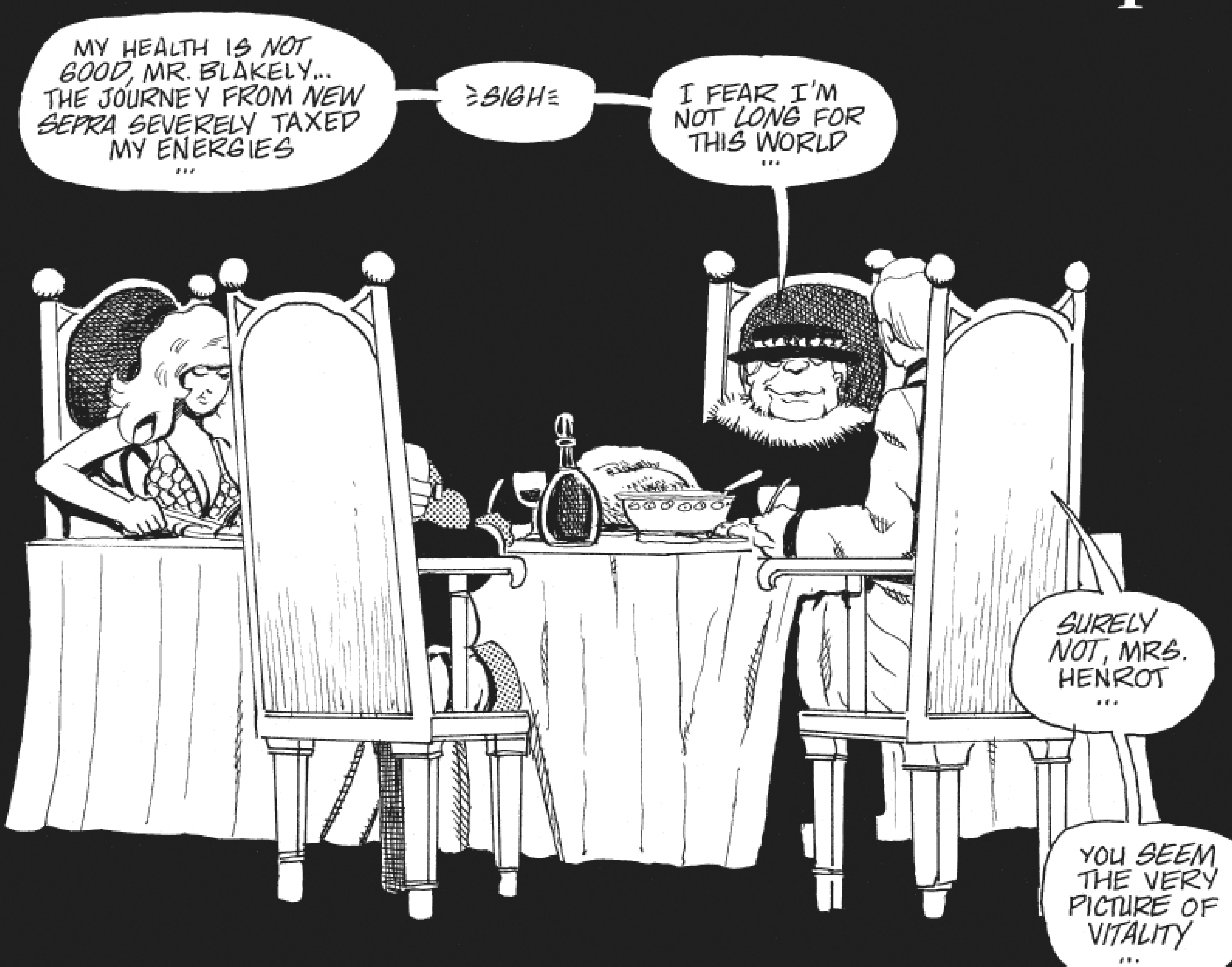
BOOK TWO
Back to Iest

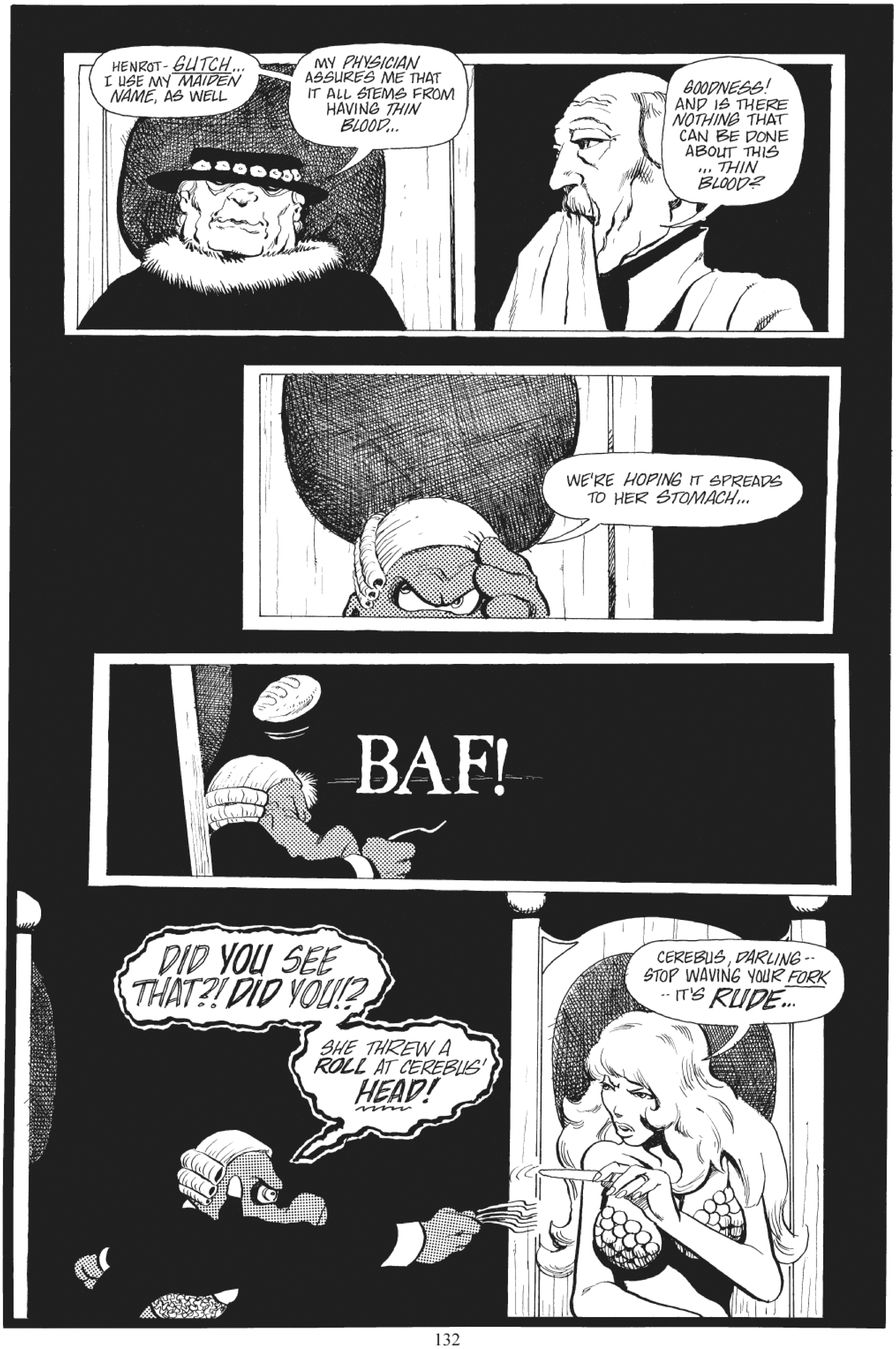
all lined up

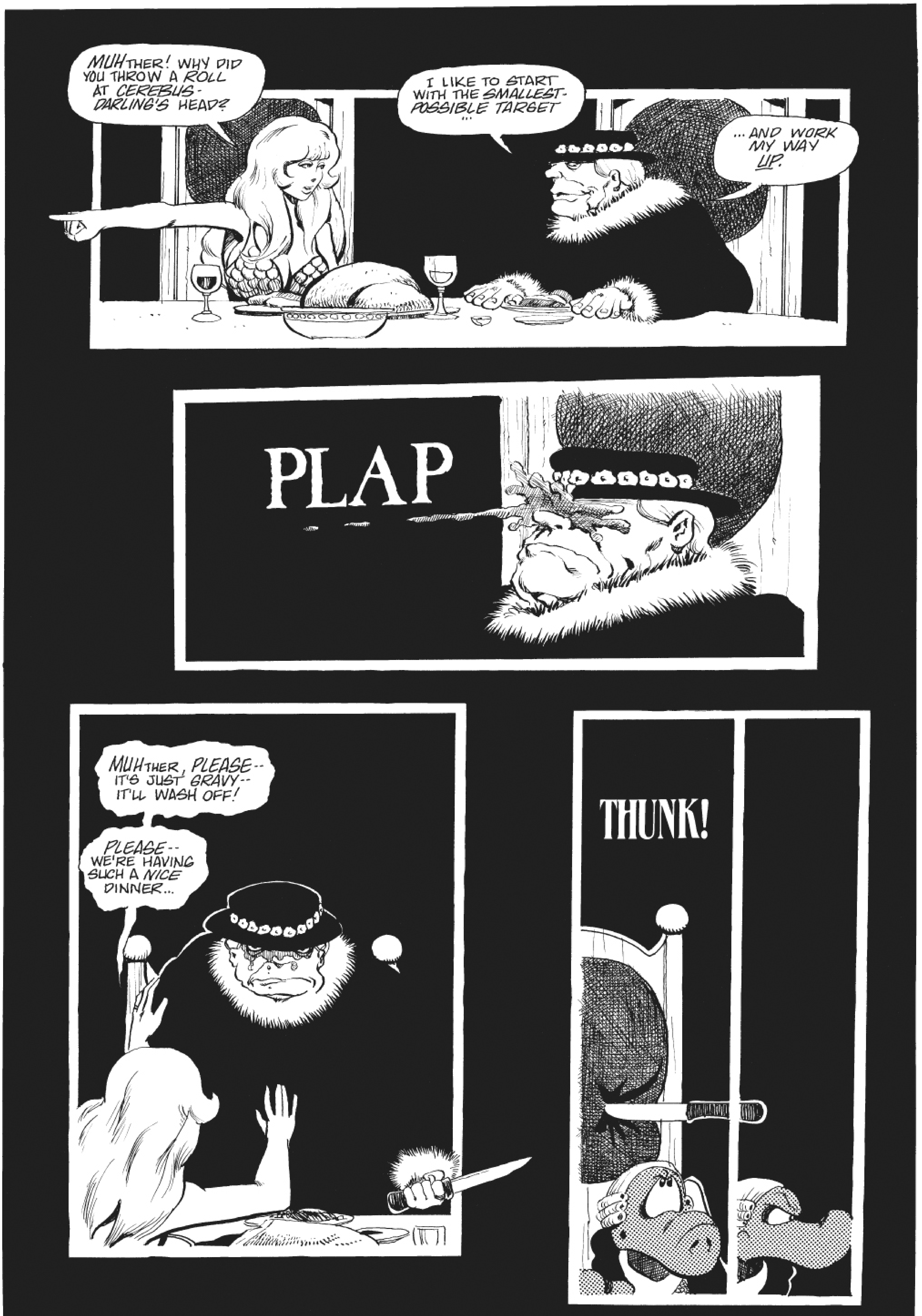


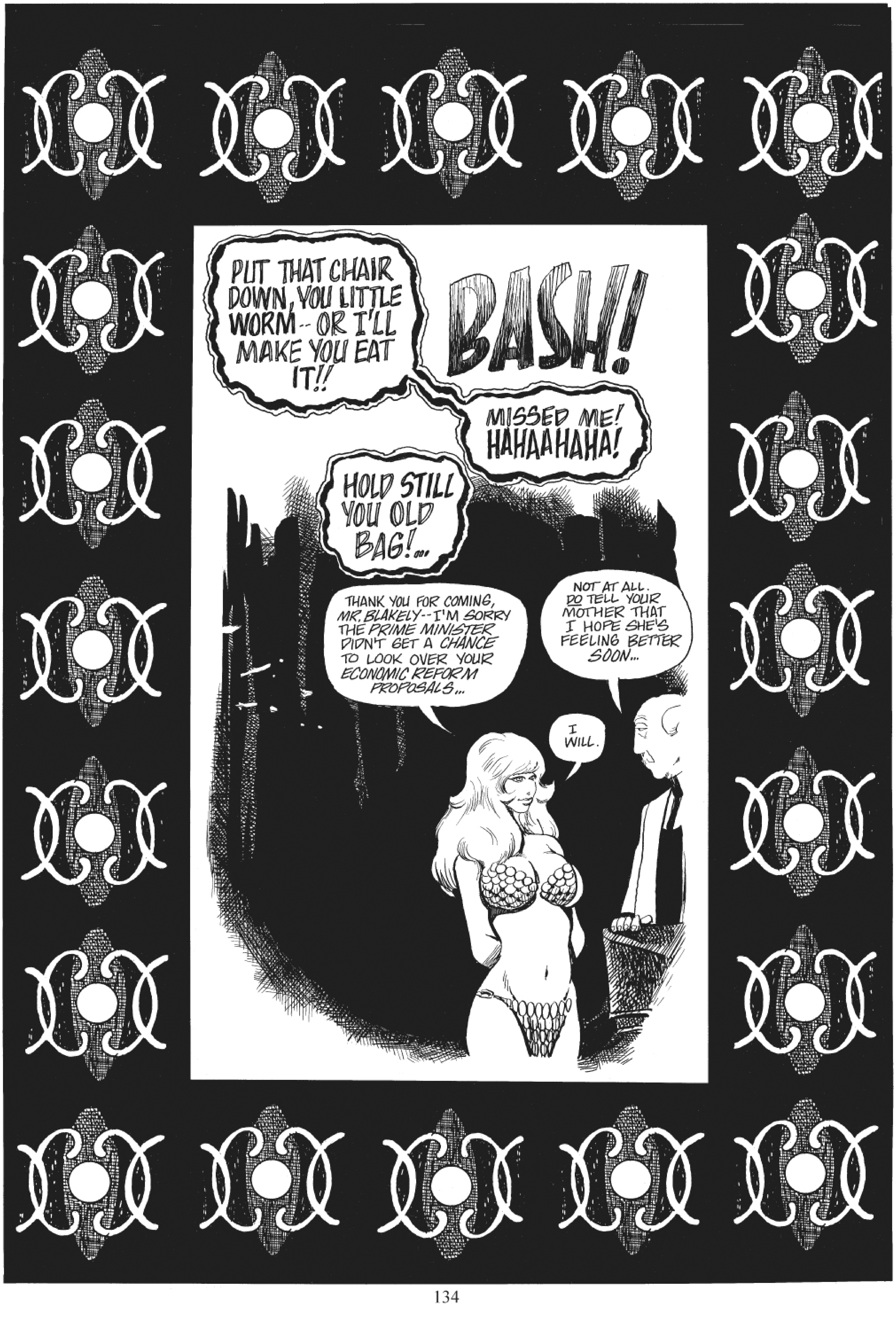
The Prime Minister
and
Mrs. The Aardvark
Cordially Invite
Harmon Blakely II
to
Dinner This Evening

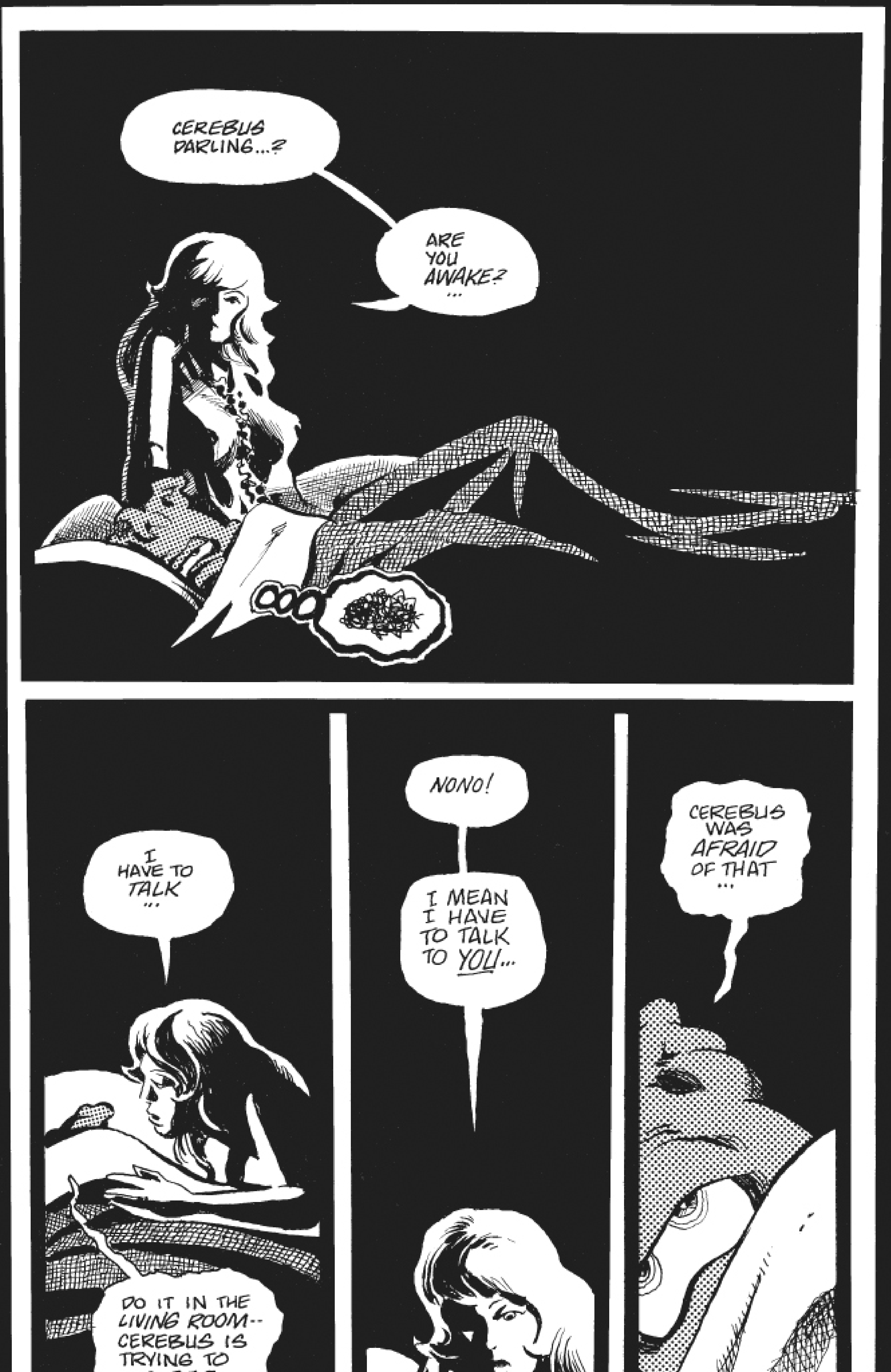
THE AMBASSADOR SUITE

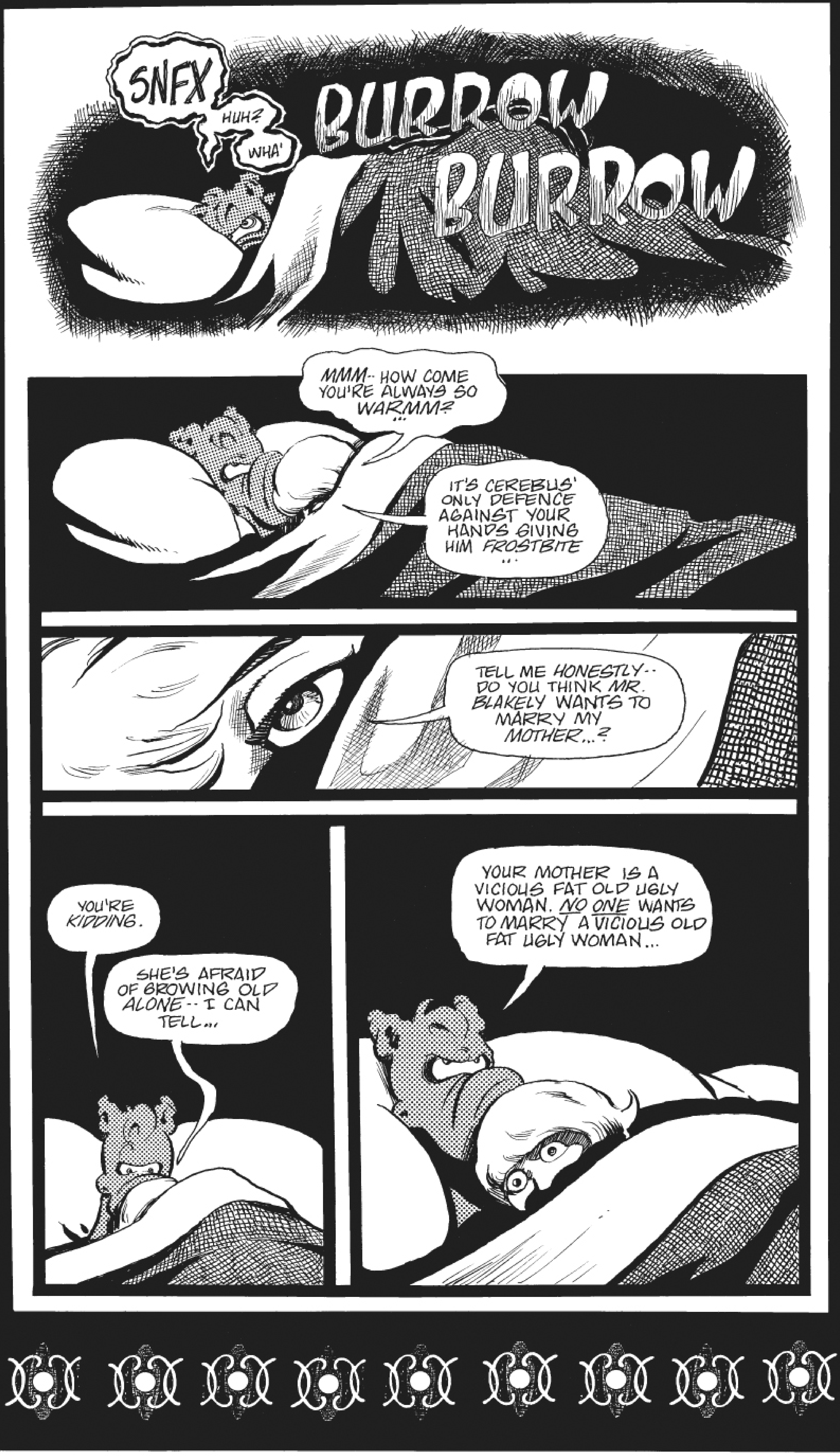

MY HEALTH IS NOT GOOD, MR. BLAKELY... THE JOURNEY FROM NEW SEPRA SEVERELY TAXED MY ENERGIES ...
SIGH
I FEAR I'M NOT LONG FOR THIS WORLD ...
SURELY NOT, MRS. HENROT ...
YOU SEEM THE VERY PICTURE OF VITALITY ...

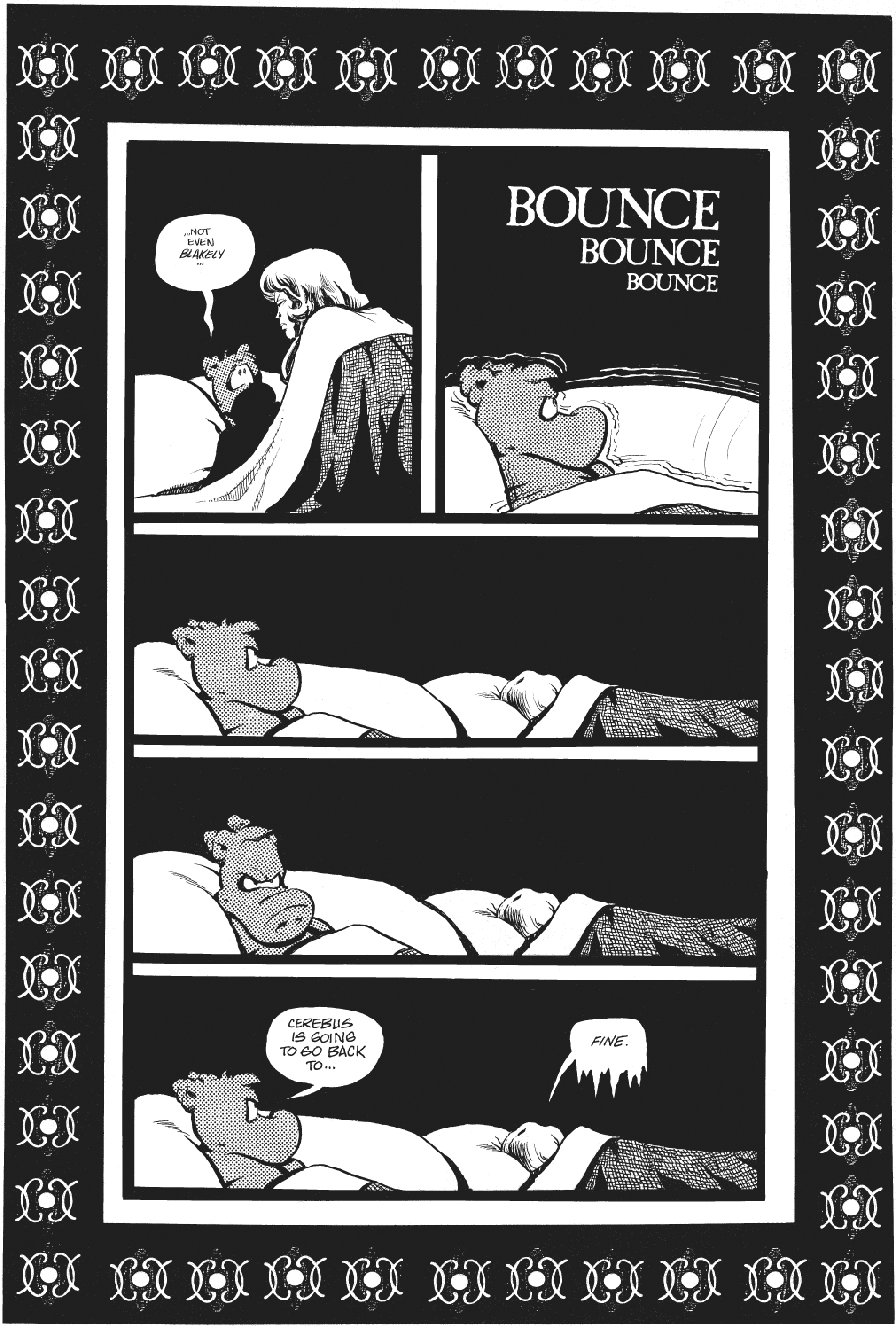

HENROT-GUTCH... I USE MY MAIDEN NAME, AS WELL
MY PHYSICIAN ASSURES ME THAT IT ALL STEMS FROM HAVING THIN BLOOD...
GOODNESS! AND IS THERE NOTHING THAT CAN BE DONE ABOUT THIS ... THIN BLOOD?
WE'RE HOPING IT SPREADS TO HER STOMACH...
BAF!
DID YOU SEE THAT?! DID YOU!?
SHE THREW A ROLL AT CEREBUS' HEAD!
CEREBUS, DARLING -- STOP WAVING YOUR FORK -- IT'S RUDE...

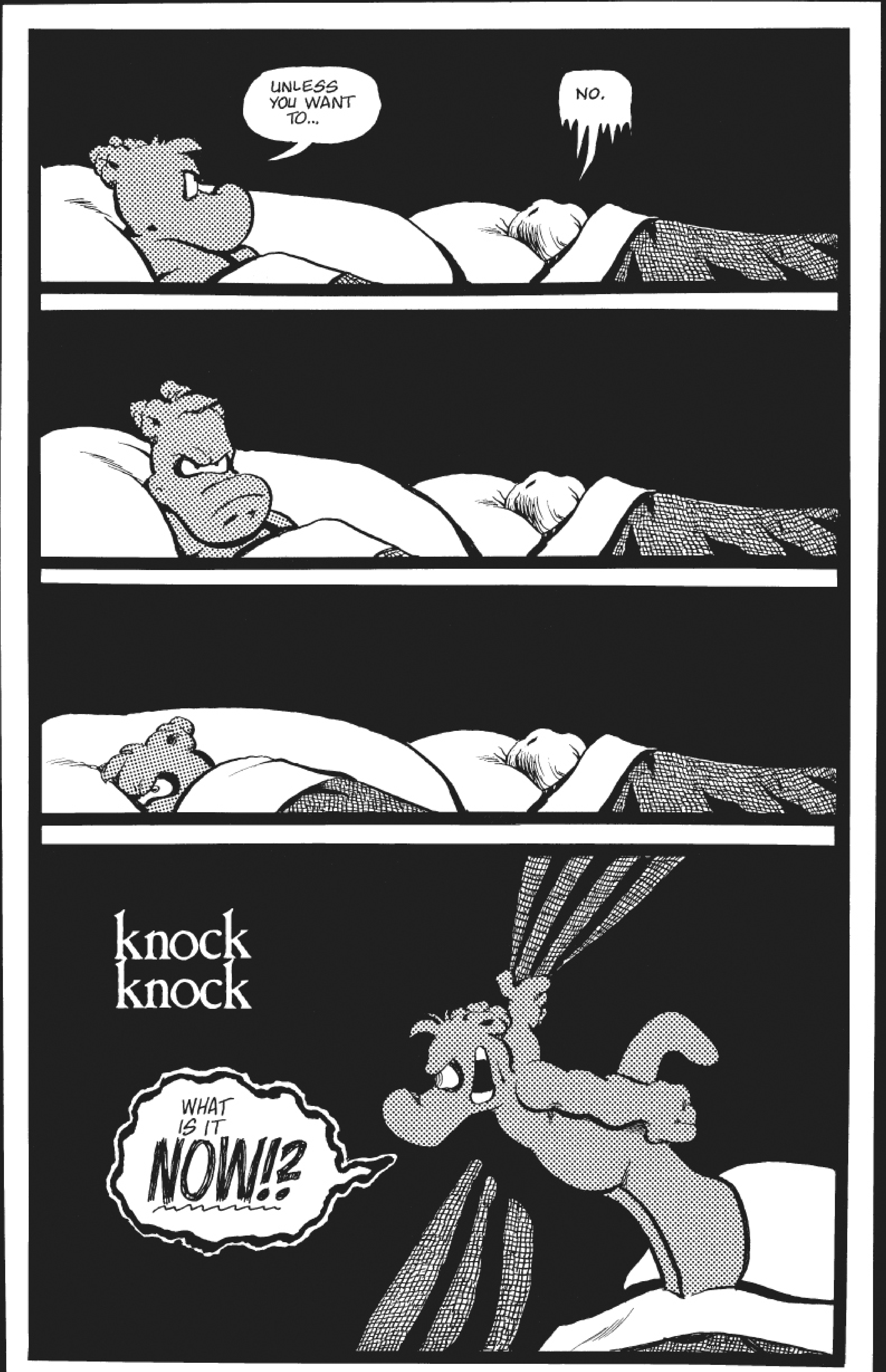

MUHTHER! WHY DID YOU THROW A ROLL AT CEREBUS-DARLING'S HEAD?
I LIKE TO START WITH THE SMALLEST-POSSIBLE TARGET ...
... AND WORK MY WAY UP.
PLAP
MUHTHER, PLEASE-- IT'S JUST GRAVY-- IT'LL WASH OFF!
PLEASE-- WE'RE HAVING SUCH A NICE DINNER...
THUNK!

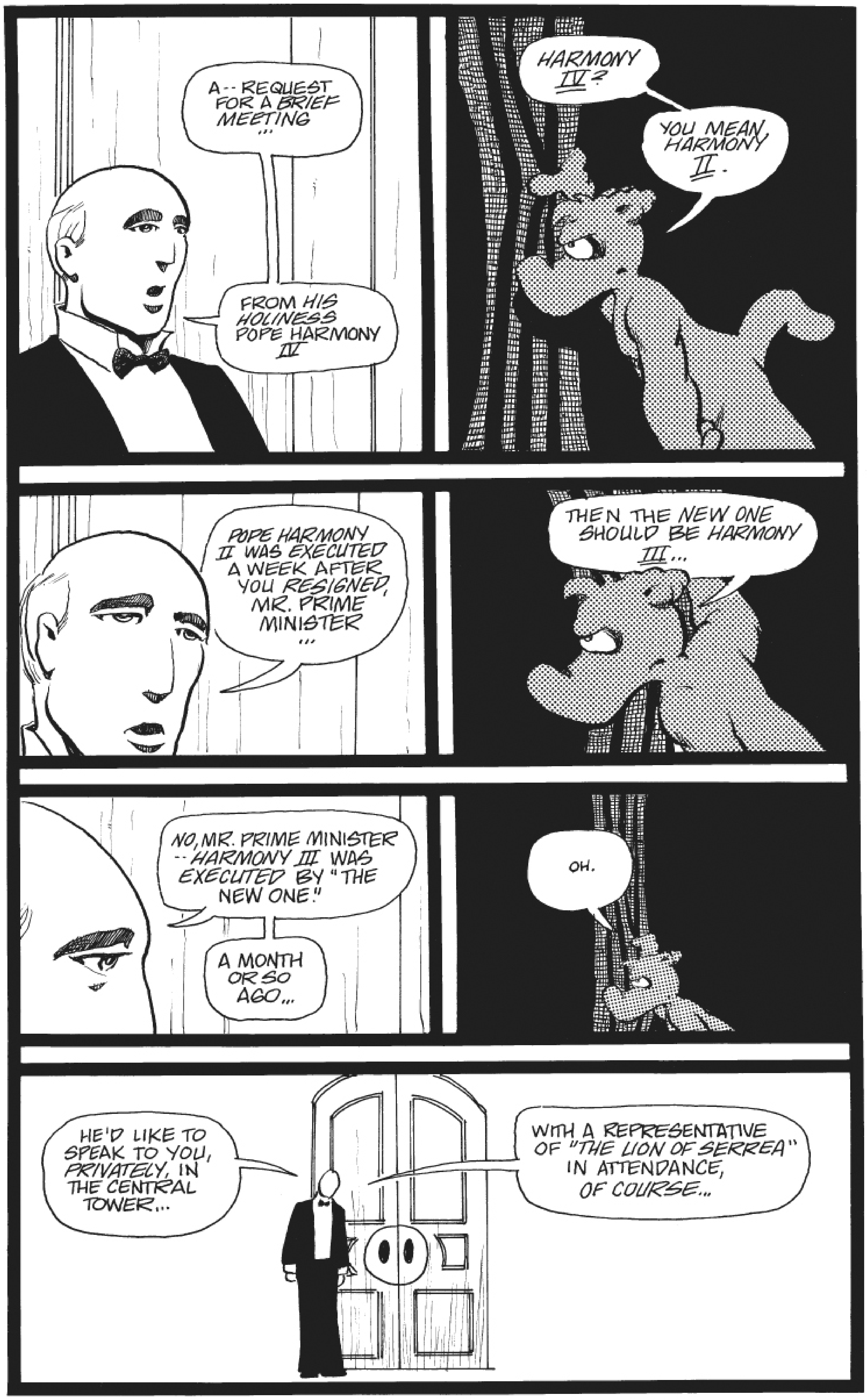

PUT THAT CHAIR DOWN, YOU LITTLE WORM-- OR I'LL MAKE YOU EAT IT!!
BASH!
MISSED ME! HAHAAHAHA!
HOLD STILL YOU OLD BAG!...
THANK YOU FOR COMING, MR. BLAKELY--I'M SORRY THE PRIME MINISTER DIDN'T GET A CHANCE TO LOOK OVER YOUR ECONOMIC REFORM PROPOSALS...
NOT AT ALL. DO TELL YOUR MOTHER THAT I HOPE SHE'S FEELING BETTER SOON...
I WILL.

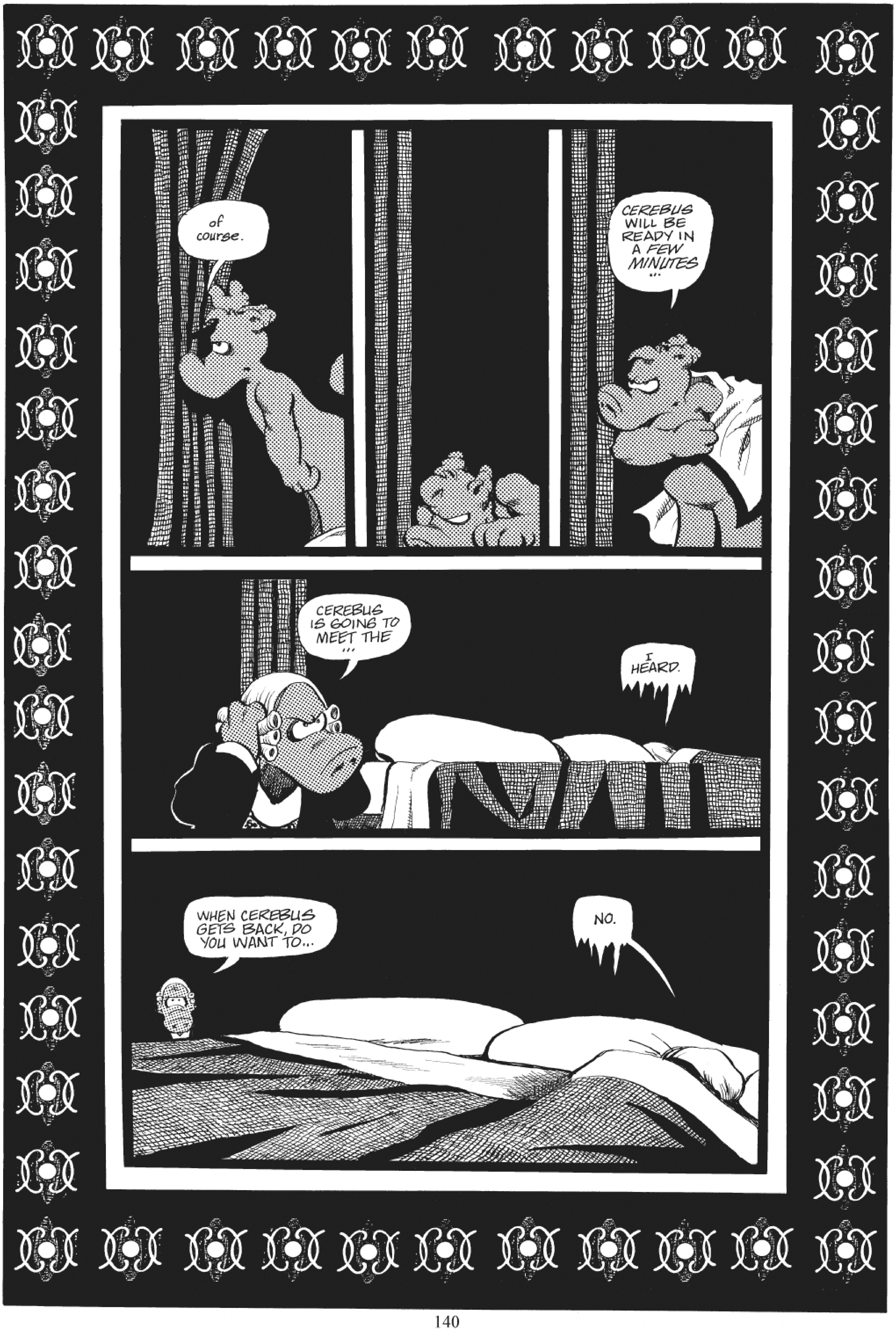

CEREBUS DARLING...?
ARE YOU AWAKE? ...
I HAVE TO TALK ...
DO IT IN THE LIVING ROOM-- CEREBUS IS TRYING TO SLEEP.
NONO!
I MEAN I HAVE TO TALK TO YOU...
CEREBUS WAS AFRAID OF THAT ...

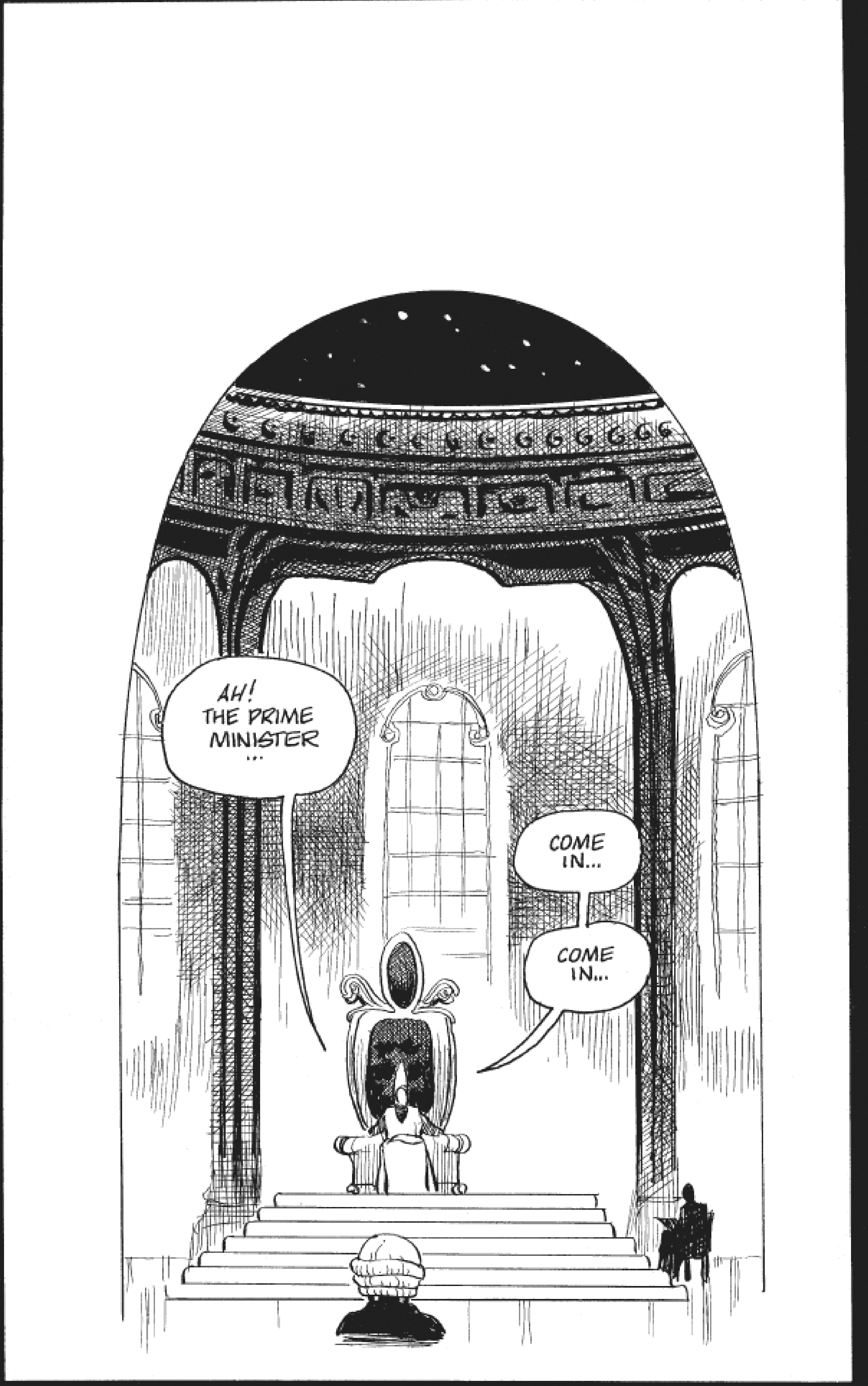

SNFX
HUH?
WHA'
BURROW BURROW
MMM.. HOW COME YOU'RE ALWAYS SO WARMM? ...
IT'S CEREBUS' ONLY DEFENCE AGAINST YOUR HANDS GIVING HIM FROSTBITE ...
TELL ME HONESTLY.. DO YOU THINK MR. BLAKELY WANTS TO MARRY MY MOTHER...?
YOU'RE KIDDING.
SHE'S AFRAID OF GROWING OLD ALONE.. I CAN TELL...
YOUR MOTHER IS A VICIOUS FAT OLD UGLY WOMAN. NO ONE WANTS TO MARRY A VICIOUS OLD FAT UGLY WOMAN...

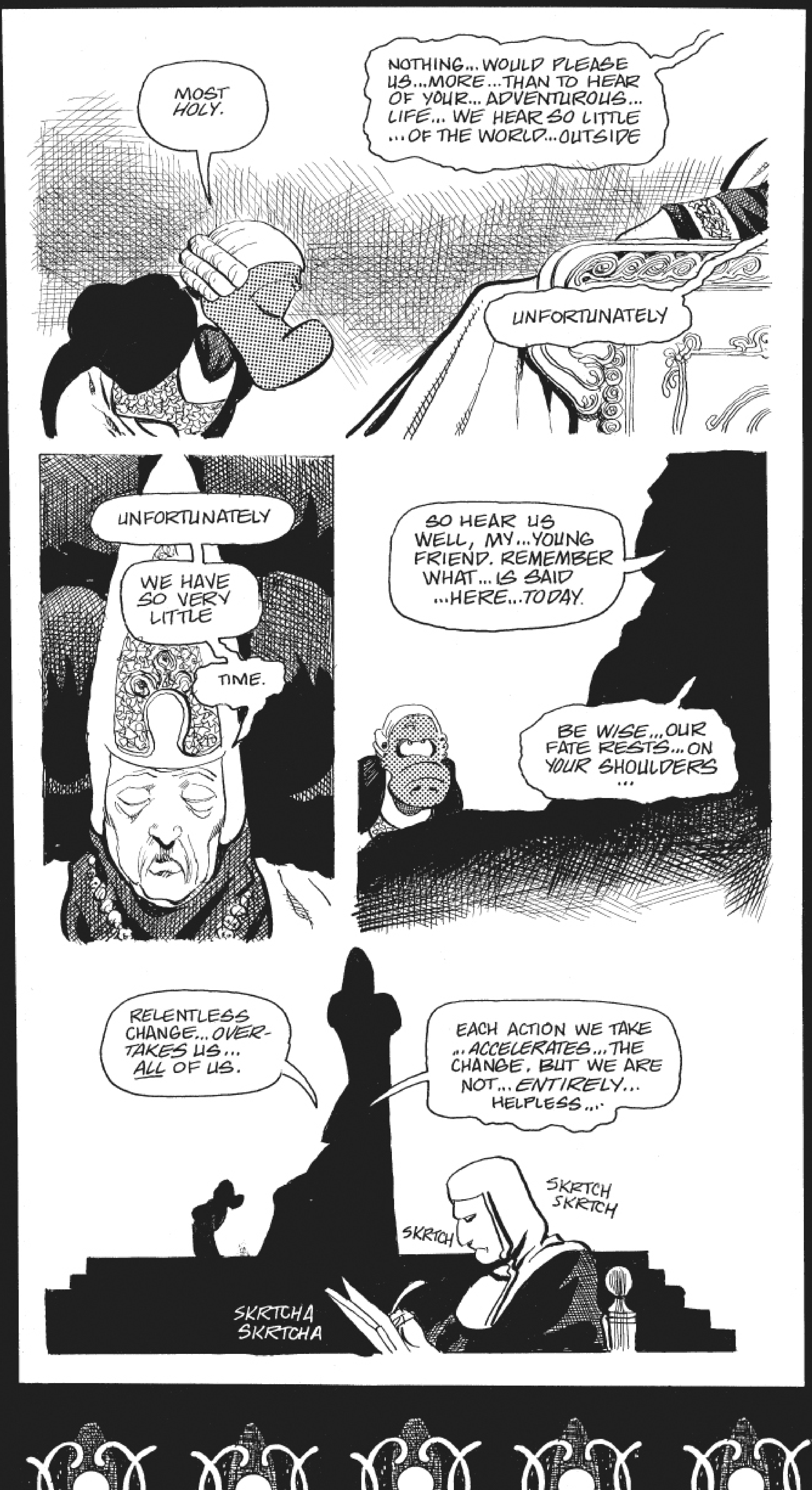

...NOT EVEN *BLAKELY* ...
BOUNCE
BOUNCE
BOUNCE
CEREBUS IS GOING TO GO BACK TO...
FINE.

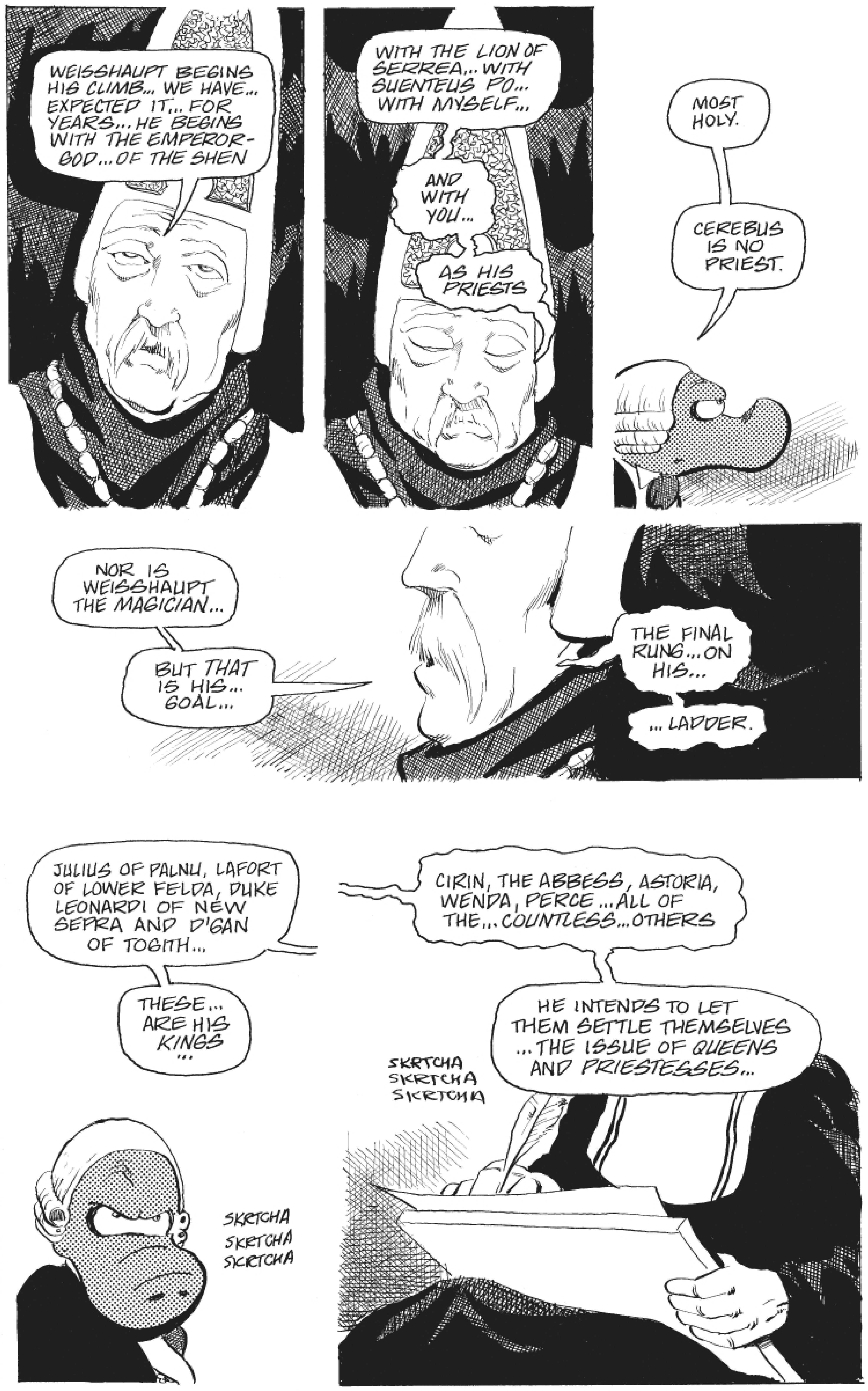

UNLESS YOU WANT TO...
NO.
knock knock
WHAT IS IT NOW!?

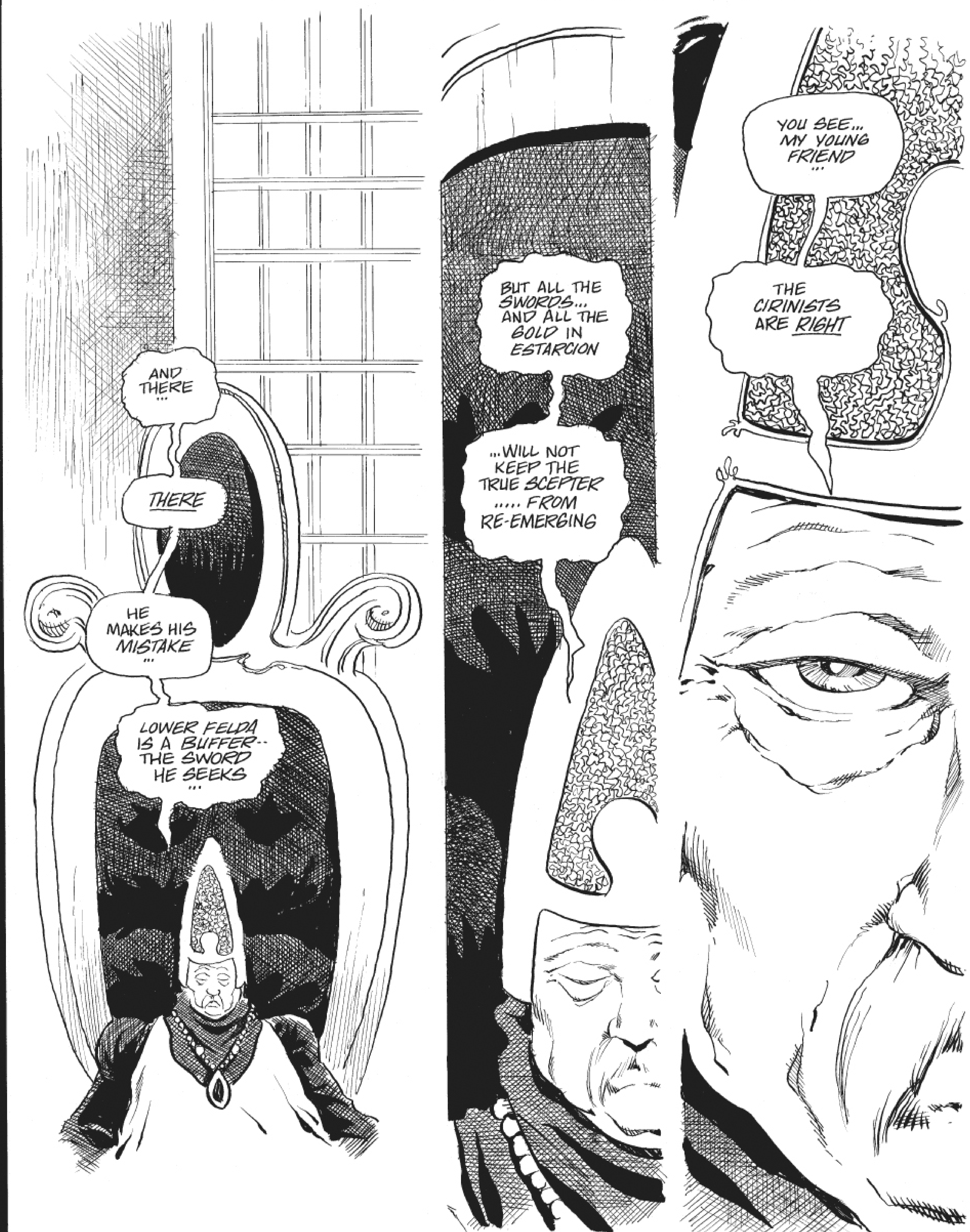

A-- REQUEST FOR A *BRIEF* MEETING ...
FROM HIS HOLINESS POPE HARMONY IV
HARMONY IV?
YOU MEAN, HARMONY II.
POPE HARMONY II WAS EXECUTED A WEEK AFTER YOU *RESIGNED,* MR. PRIME MINISTER ...
THEN THE *NEW ONE* SHOULD BE HARMONY III...
NO, MR. PRIME MINISTER -- HARMONY III WAS EXECUTED BY "THE NEW ONE."
A MONTH OR SO AGO...
OH.
HE'D LIKE TO SPEAK TO YOU, *PRIVATELY,* IN THE CENTRAL TOWER...
WITH A REPRESENTATIVE OF *"THE LION OF SERREA"* IN ATTENDANCE, OF COURSE...

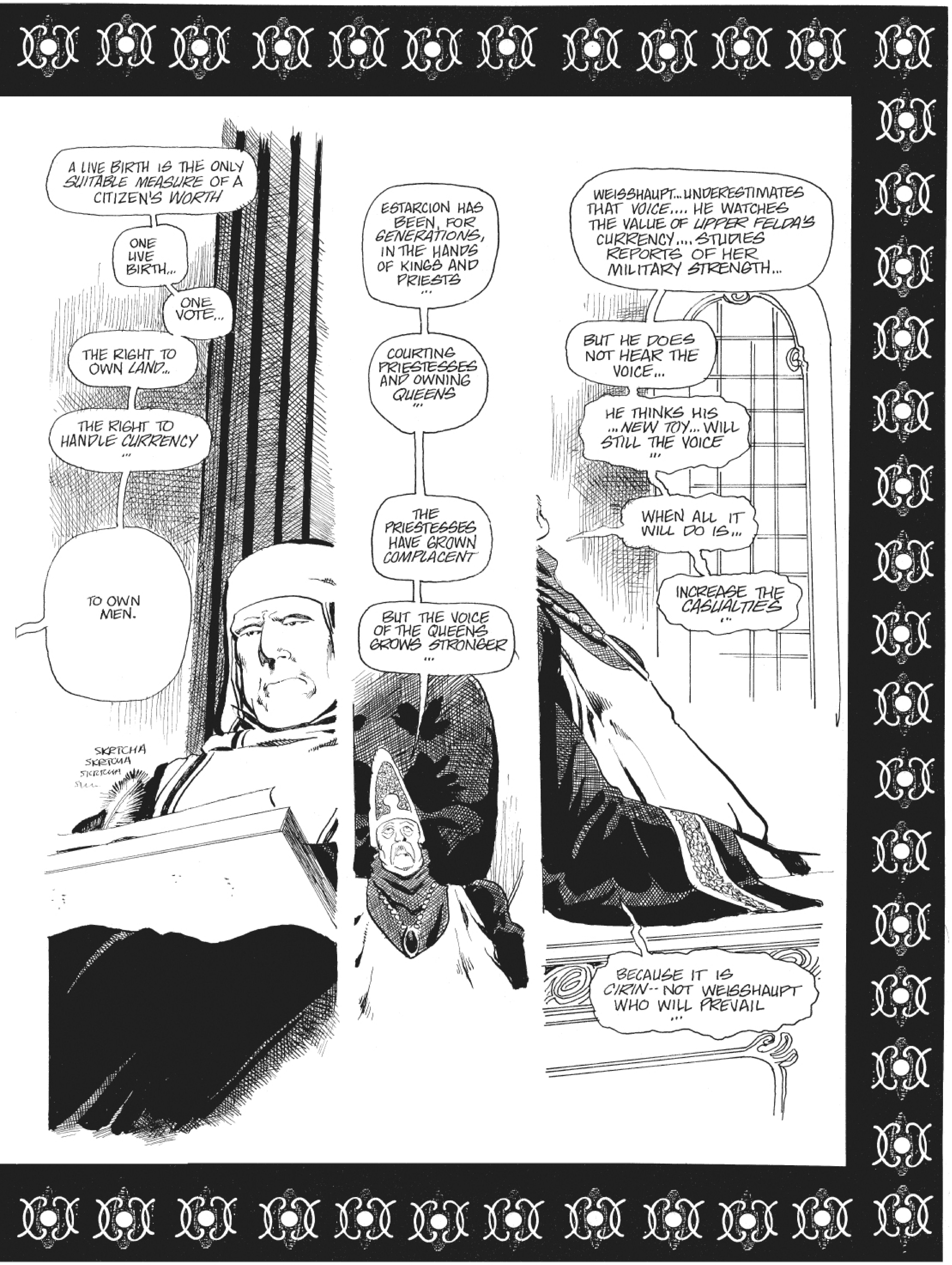

of course.
CEREBUS WILL BE READY IN A FEW MINUTES...
CEREBUS IS GOING TO MEET THE ...
I HEARD.
WHEN CEREBUS GETS BACK, DO YOU WANT TO...
NO.

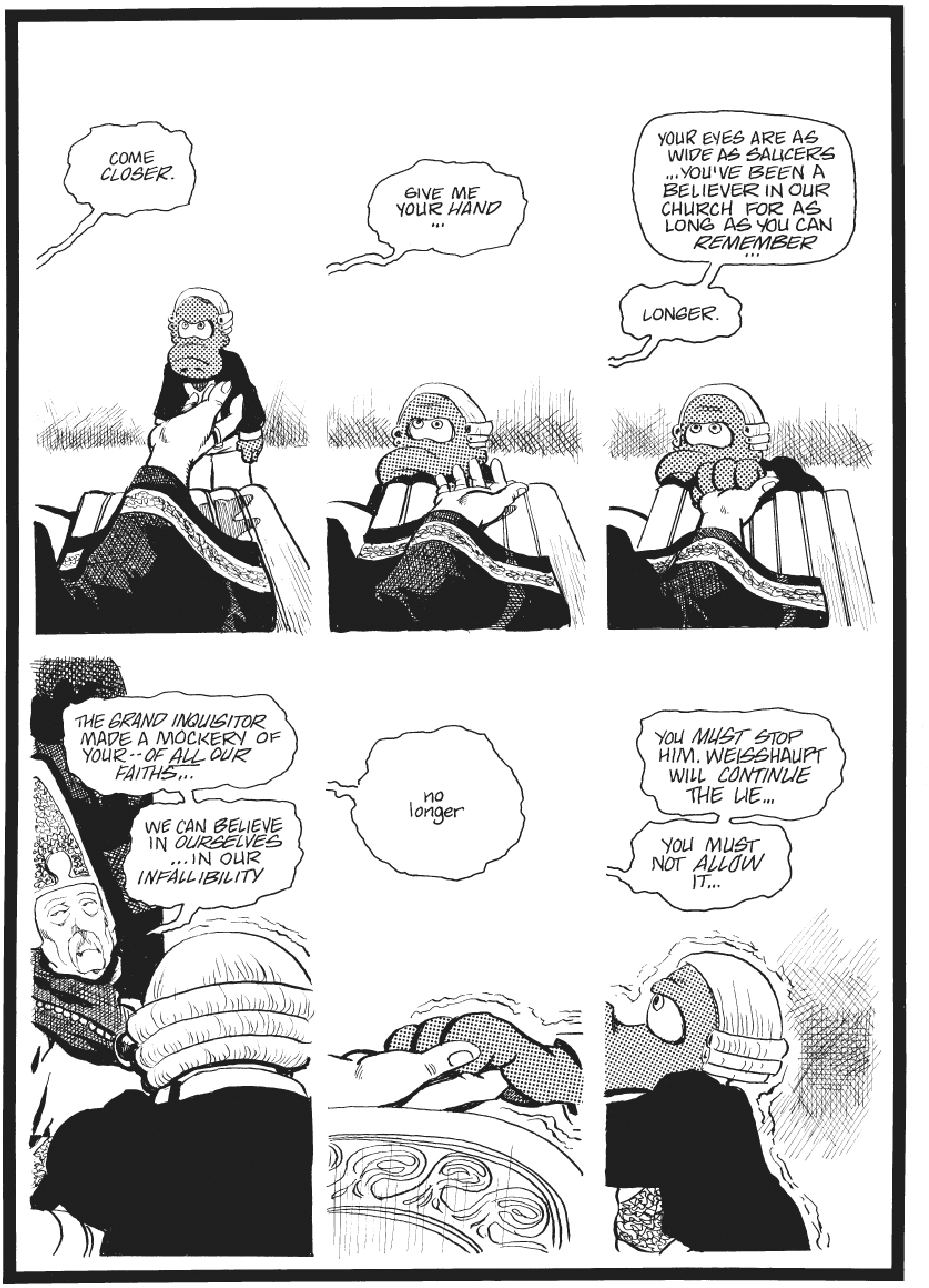

AH! THE PRIME MINISTER ...
COME IN...
COME IN...

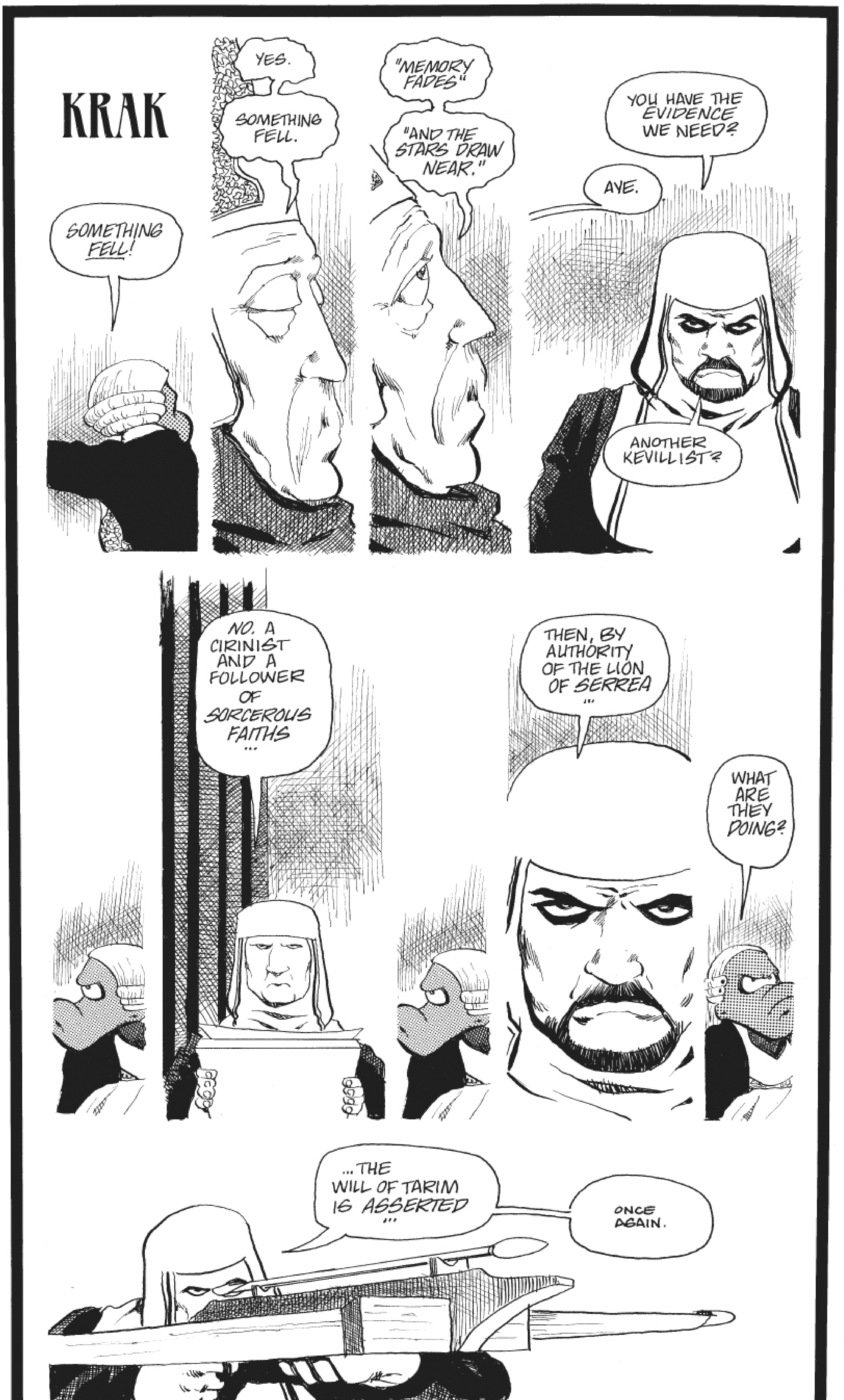

MOST HOLY.
NOTHING... WOULD PLEASE US... MORE... THAN TO HEAR OF YOUR... ADVENTUROUS... LIFE... WE HEAR SO LITTLE ...OF THE WORLD...OUTSIDE
UNFORTUNATELY
UNFORTUNATELY
WE HAVE SO VERY LITTLE
TIME.
SO HEAR US WELL, MY...YOUNG FRIEND. REMEMBER WHAT... IS SAID ...HERE...TODAY.
BE WISE...OUR FATE RESTS...ON YOUR SHOULDERS ...
RELENTLESS CHANGE...OVERTAKES US... ALL OF US.
EACH ACTION WE TAKE ...ACCELERATES...THE CHANGE. BUT WE ARE NOT...ENTIRELY... HELPLESS...
SKRTCH SKRTCH
SKRTCH
SKRTCHA SKRTCHA

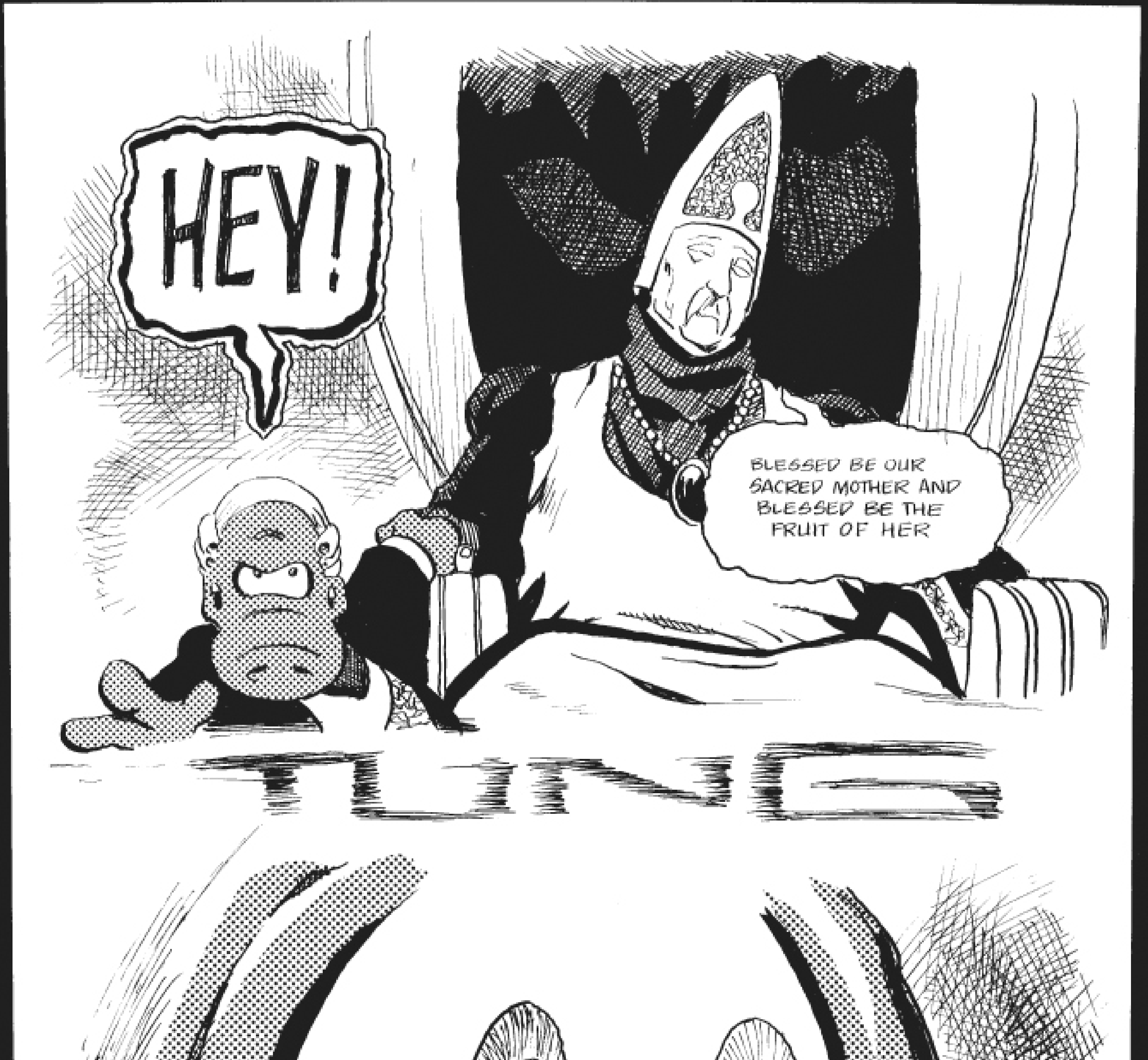

WEISSHAUPT BEGINS HIS CLIMB... WE HAVE... EXPECTED IT... FOR YEARS... HE BEGINS WITH THE EMPEROR-GOD... OF THE SHEN
WITH THE LION OF SERREA... WITH SUENTEUS PO... WITH MYSELF...
AND WITH YOU...
AS HIS PRIESTS
MOST HOLY.
CEREBUS IS NO PRIEST.
NOR IS WEISSHAUPT THE *MAGICIAN*...
BUT *THAT* IS HIS... GOAL...
THE FINAL RUNG... ON HIS...
... LADDER.
JULIUS OF PALNU, LAFORT OF LOWER FELDA, DUKE LEONARDI OF NEW SEPRA AND D'GAN OF TOGITH...
THESE... ARE HIS *KINGS* ...
CIRIN, THE ABBESS, ASTORIA, WENDA, PERCE ... ALL OF THE... *COUNTLESS*... OTHERS
HE INTENDS TO LET THEM SETTLE THEMSELVES ... THE ISSUE OF *QUEENS* AND *PRIESTESSES*...
SKRTCHA SKRTCHA SKRTCHA
SKRTCHA SKRTCHA SKRTCHA

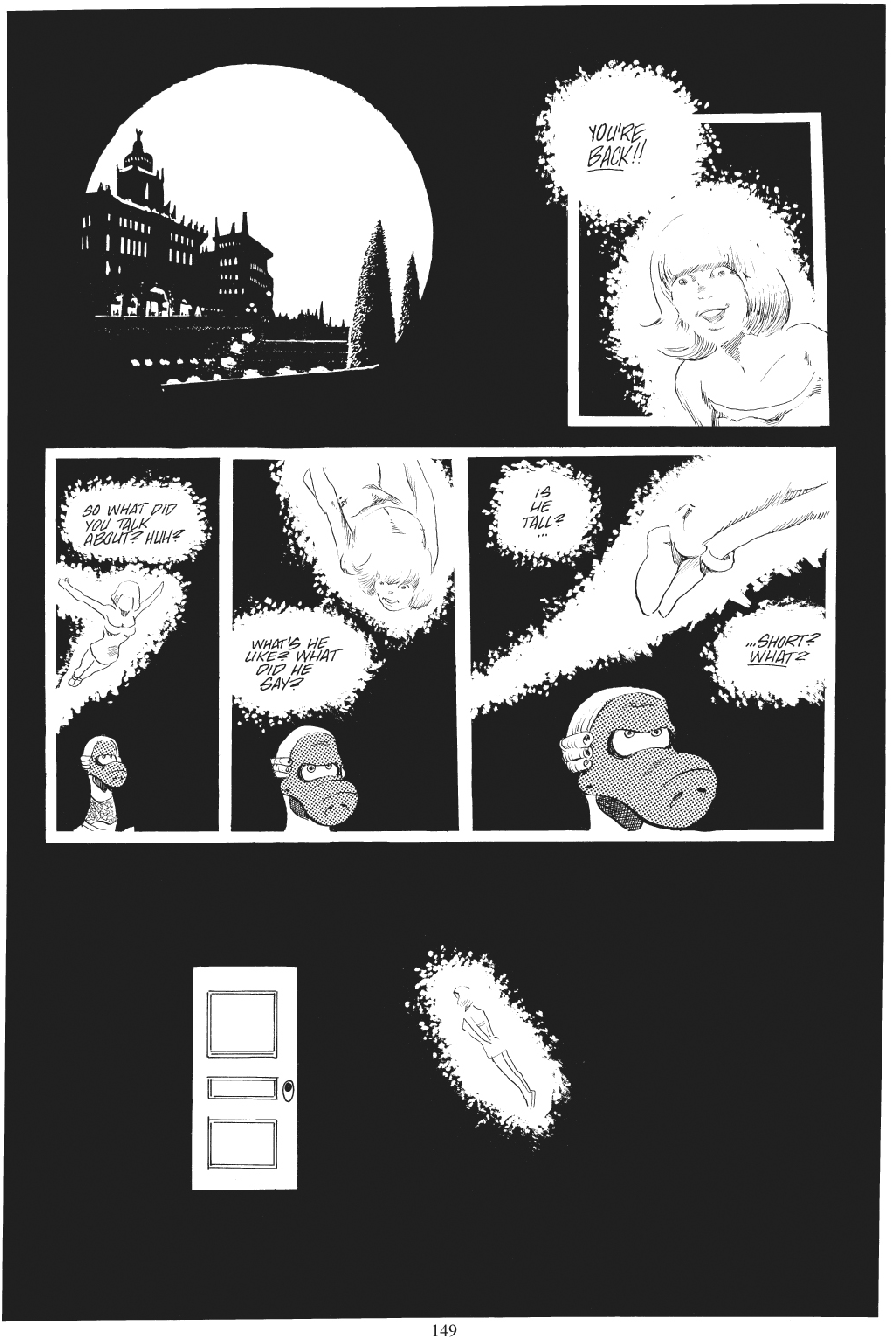

AND THERE ...
THERE
HE MAKES HIS MISTAKE ...
LOWER FELDA IS A BUFFER-- THE SWORD HE SEEKS ...
BUT ALL THE SWORDS... AND ALL THE GOLD IN ESTARCION
...WILL NOT KEEP THE TRUE SCEPTER ..... FROM RE-EMERGING
YOU SEE... MY YOUNG FRIEND ...
THE CIRINISTS ARE RIGHT

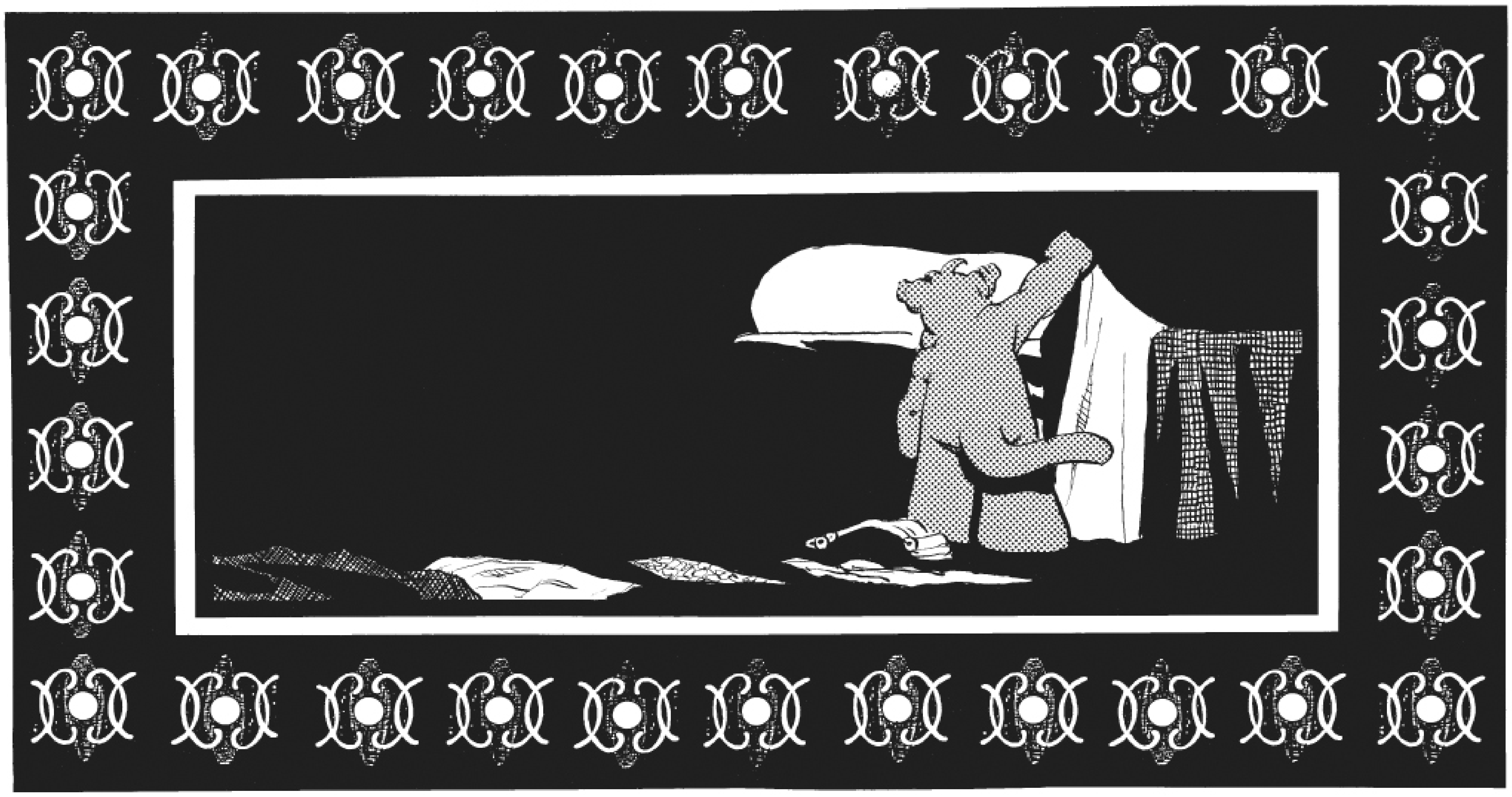

A LIVE BIRTH IS THE ONLY *SUITABLE MEASURE* OF A CITIZEN'S *WORTH*
ONE LIVE BIRTH...
ONE VOTE...
THE RIGHT TO OWN *LAND*...
THE RIGHT TO HANDLE *CURRENCY*...
TO OWN MEN.
SKRTCHA SKRTCHA SKRTCHA SKR
ESTARCION HAS BEEN, FOR *GENERATIONS*, IN THE HANDS OF KINGS AND PRIESTS...
COURTING PRIESTESSES AND OWNING *QUEENS*...
THE PRIESTESSES HAVE GROWN *COMPLACENT*
BUT THE VOICE OF THE QUEENS GROWS STRONGER...
WEISSHAUPT...UNDERESTIMATES THAT VOICE.... HE WATCHES THE VALUE OF *UPPER FELDA'S* CURRENCY.... STUDIES REPORTS OF HER MILITARY *STRENGTH*...
BUT HE DOES NOT HEAR THE VOICE...
HE THINKS HIS ...*NEW TOY*... WILL STILL THE VOICE...
WHEN ALL IT WILL DO IS...
INCREASE THE *CASUALTIES*...
BECAUSE IT IS *CIRIN*-- NOT WEISSHAUPT WHO WILL PREVAIL...

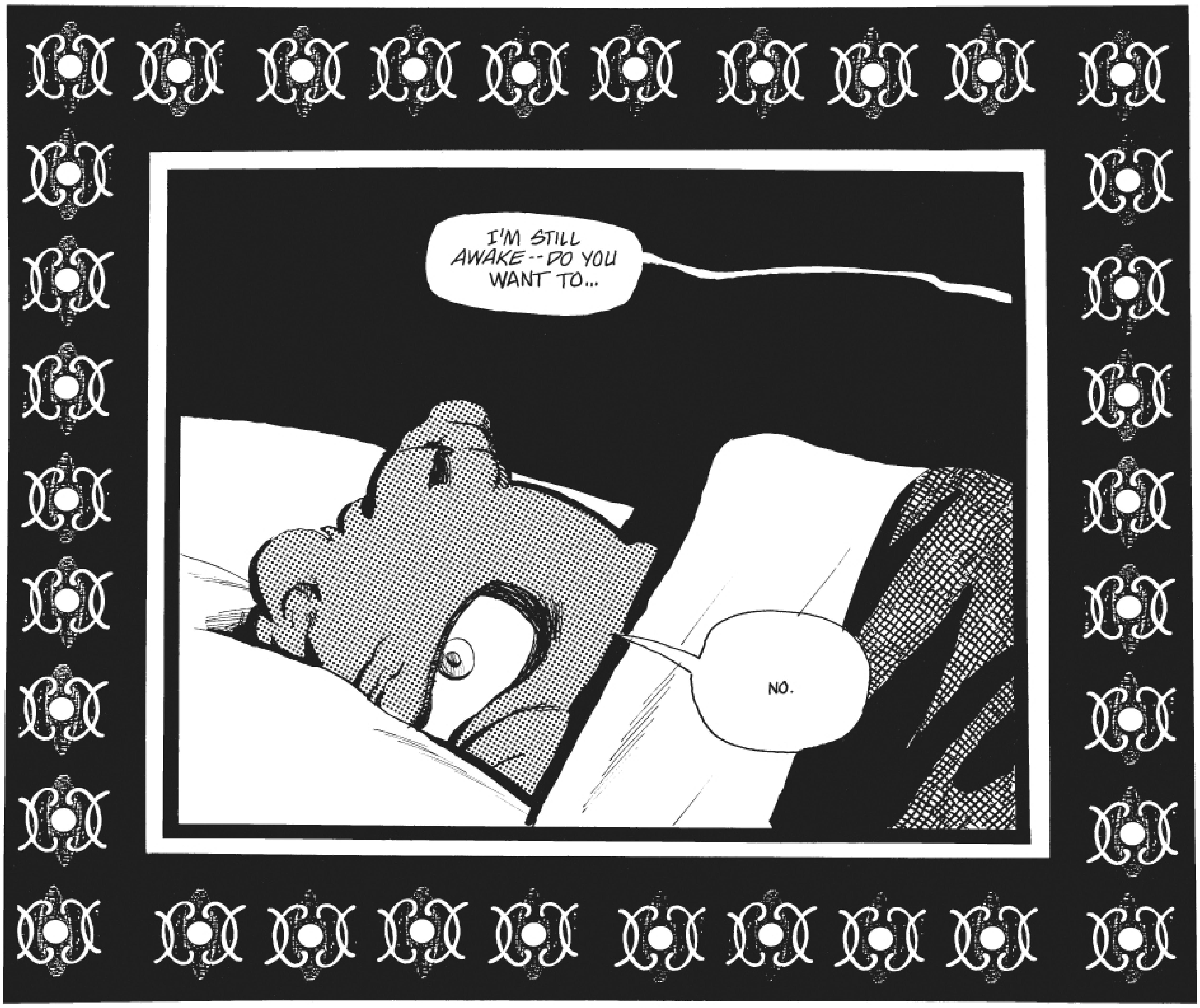

COME CLOSER.
GIVE ME YOUR HAND ...
YOUR EYES ARE AS WIDE AS SAUCERS ...YOU'VE BEEN A BELIEVER IN OUR CHURCH FOR AS LONG AS YOU CAN REMEMBER ...
LONGER.
THE GRAND INQUISITOR MADE A MOCKERY OF YOUR--OF ALL OUR FAITHS...
WE CAN BELIEVE IN OURSELVES ...IN OUR INFALLIBILITY
no longer
YOU MUST STOP HIM. WEISSHAUPT WILL CONTINUE THE LIE...
YOU MUST NOT ALLOW IT...


KRAK
SOMETHING FELL!
YES.
SOMETHING FELL.
"MEMORY FADES"
"AND THE STARS DRAW NEAR."
YOU HAVE THE EVIDENCE WE NEED?
AYE.
ANOTHER KEVILLIST?
NO. A CIRINIST AND A FOLLOWER OF SORCEROUS FAITHS ...
THEN, BY AUTHORITY OF THE LION OF SERREA ...
WHAT ARE THEY DOING?
...THE WILL OF TARIM IS ASSERTED ...
ONCE AGAIN.

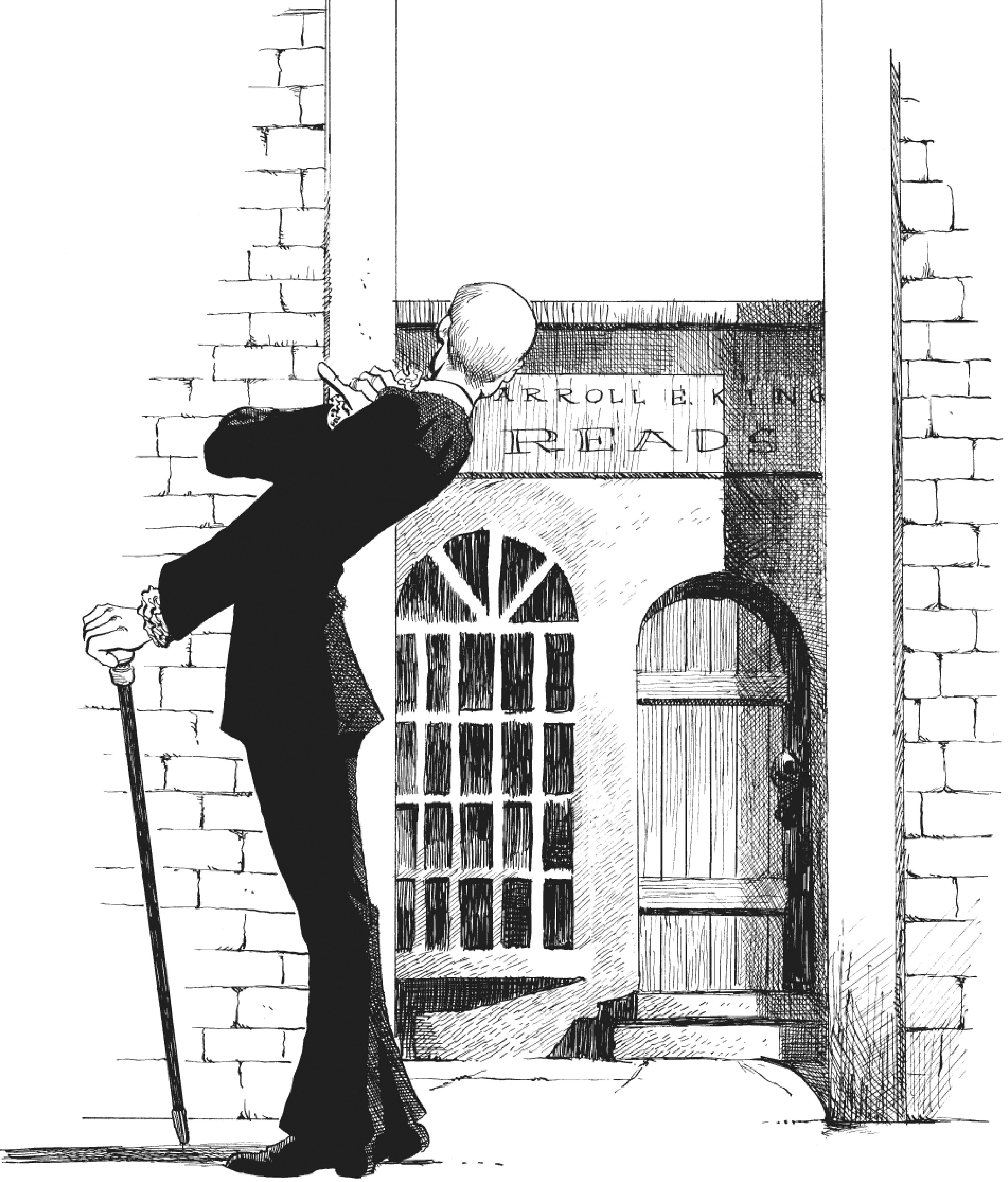

HEY!
BLESSED BE OUR SACRED MOTHER AND BLESSED BE THE FRUIT OF HER
TUNG
THUNK

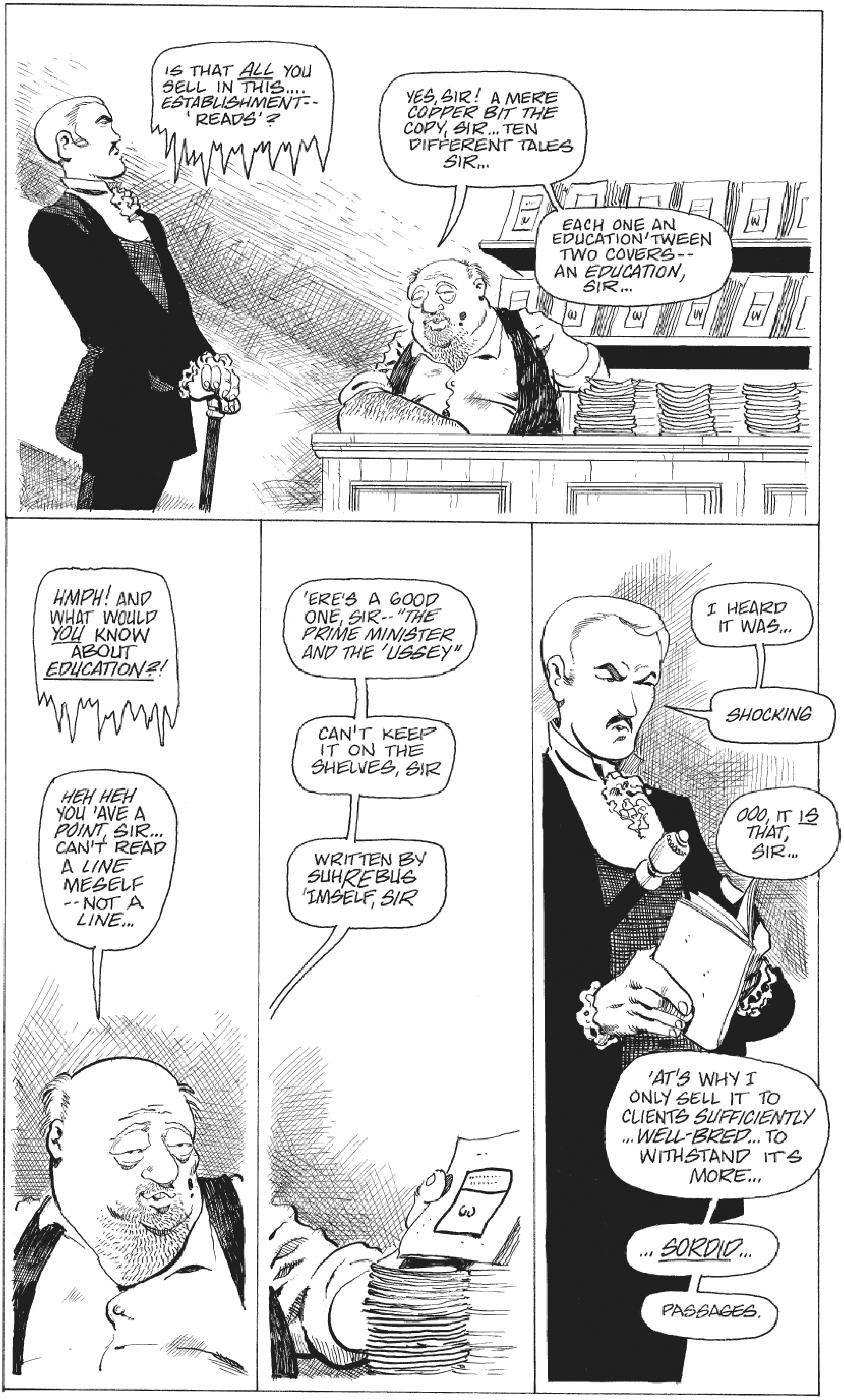

YOU'RE BACK!!
SO WHAT DID YOU TALK ABOUT? HUH?
WHAT'S HE LIKE? WHAT DID HE SAY?
IS HE TALL? ...
...SHORT? WHAT?

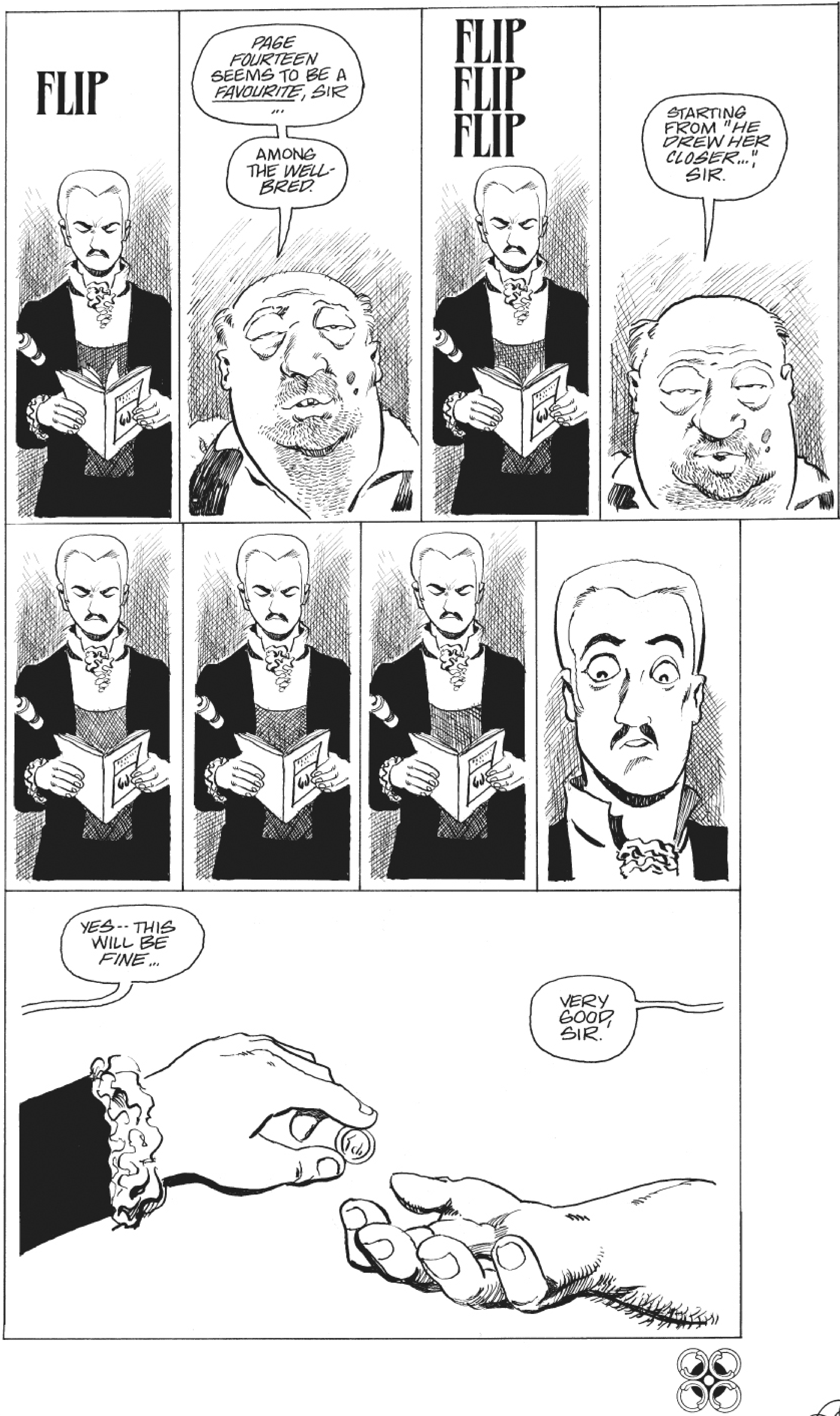



I'M STILL AWAKE--DO YOU WANT TO...
NO.

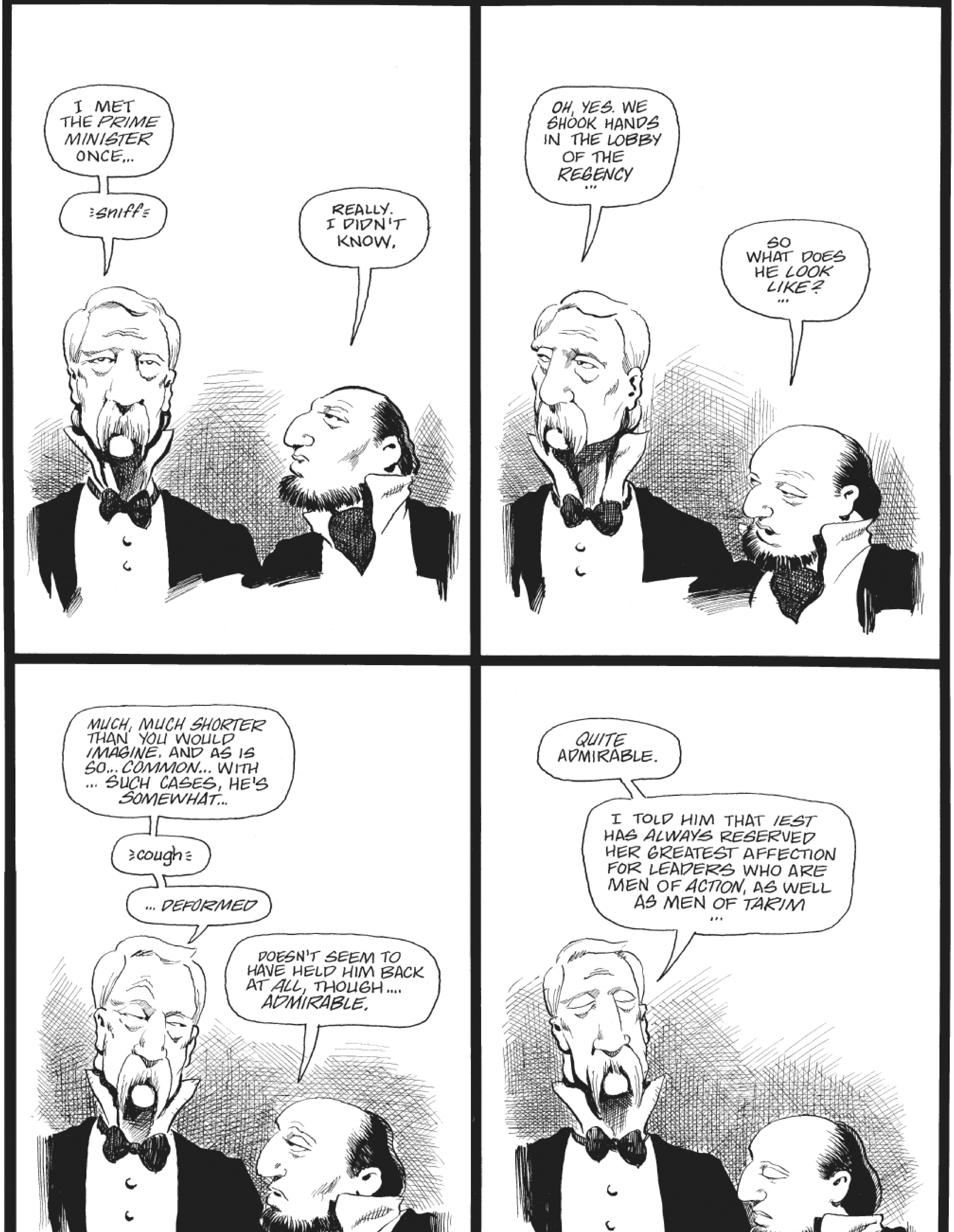
CARROLL
E.
KING
READS


ARROLL E. KING
READS


IS THAT ALL YOU SELL IN THIS.... ESTABLISHMENT-- 'READS'?
YES, SIR! A MERE COPPER BIT THE COPY, SIR... TEN DIFFERENT TALES SIR...
EACH ONE AN EDUCATION 'TWEEN TWO COVERS-- AN EDUCATION, SIR...
W
HMPH! AND WHAT WOULD YOU KNOW ABOUT EDUCATION?!
HEH HEH YOU 'AVE A POINT, SIR... CAN'T READ A LINE MESELF --NOT A LINE...
'ERE'S A GOOD ONE, SIR--"THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE 'USSEY"
CAN'T KEEP IT ON THE SHELVES, SIR
WRITTEN BY SUHREBUS 'IMSELF, SIR
W
I HEARD IT WAS...
SHOCKING
OOO, IT IS THAT, SIR...
'AT'S WHY I ONLY SELL IT TO CLIENTS SUFFICIENTLY ...WELL-BRED... TO WITHSTAND IT'S MORE...
...SORDID...
PASSAGES.

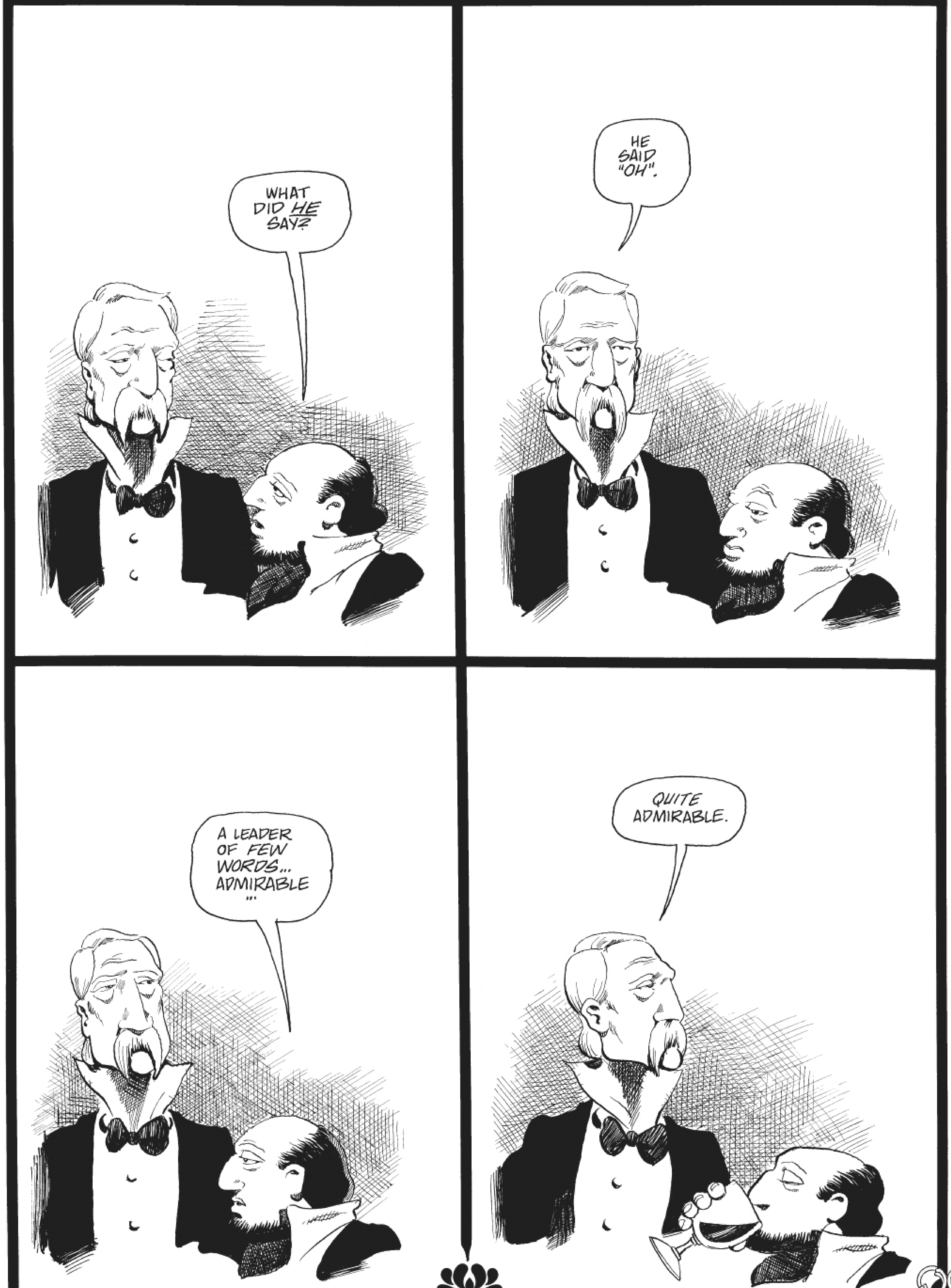

FLIP
PAGE FOURTEEN SEEMS TO BE A FAVOURITE, SIR ...
AMONG THE WELL-BRED.
FLIP FLIP FLIP
STARTING FROM "HE DREW HER CLOSER...," SIR.
YES -- THIS WILL BE FINE...
VERY GOOD, SIR.

AT THE CLUB



I MET THE *PRIME MINISTER* ONCE...
≷sniff≶
REALLY. I DIDN'T KNOW.
OH, YES. WE SHOOK HANDS IN THE LOBBY OF THE *REGENCY* ...
SO WHAT DOES HE *LOOK LIKE?* ...
MUCH, MUCH *SHORTER* THAN YOU WOULD *IMAGINE*. AND AS IS SO... *COMMON*... WITH ... SUCH CASES, HE'S *SOMEWHAT*...
≷cough≶
... *DEFORMED*
DOESN'T SEEM TO HAVE HELD HIM BACK AT *ALL*, THOUGH.... *ADMIRABLE.*
QUITE ADMIRABLE.
I TOLD HIM THAT *IEST* HAS *ALWAYS* RESERVED HER GREATEST AFFECTION FOR LEADERS WHO ARE MEN OF *ACTION*, AS WELL AS MEN OF *TARIM* ...

ONE AFTERNOON


WHAT DID HE SAY?
HE SAID "OH".
A LEADER OF FEW WORDS... ADMIRABLE ...
QUITE ADMIRABLE.

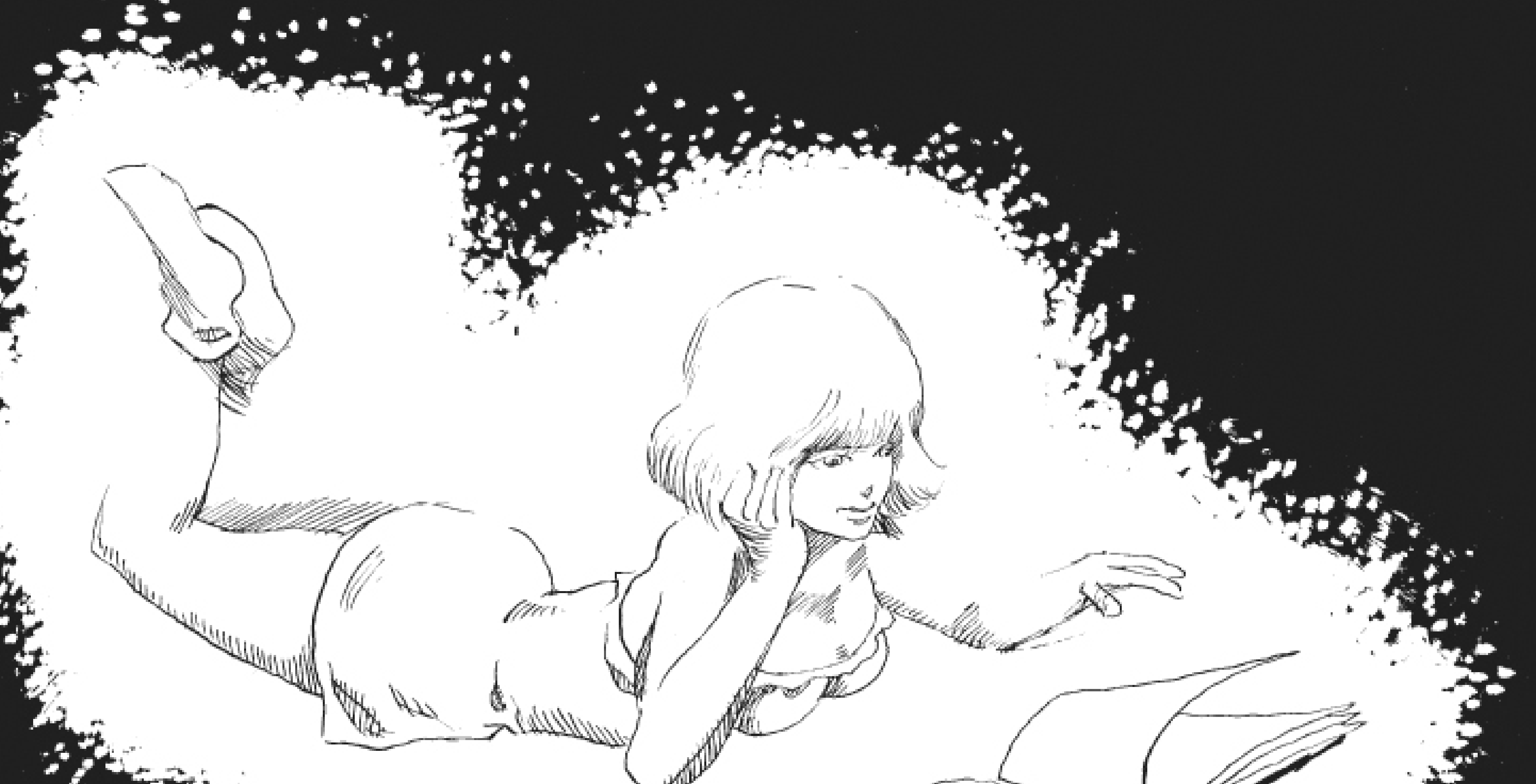
MEMOIRS

"On Governing" PART the FIFTH
by Cerebus, Permanent Prime Minister of
Iest

Responsibility

Everyone says that having power is a great responsibility. This is a lot of bunk. Responsibility is when someone can blame you if something goes wrong. When you have power you are surrounded by people whose job it is to take the blame for your mistakes. If they're smart, that is. Some of Cerebus' staff used to insist on only taking the blame for their own mistakes. Cerebus had a bunch of them charged with treason and executed. At the very next meeting, one of Cerebus' mistakes was mentioned and Cerebus asked whose fault is this? Every hand in the room went up, Cerebus told them all not to let it happen again and we moved on to other mistakes.

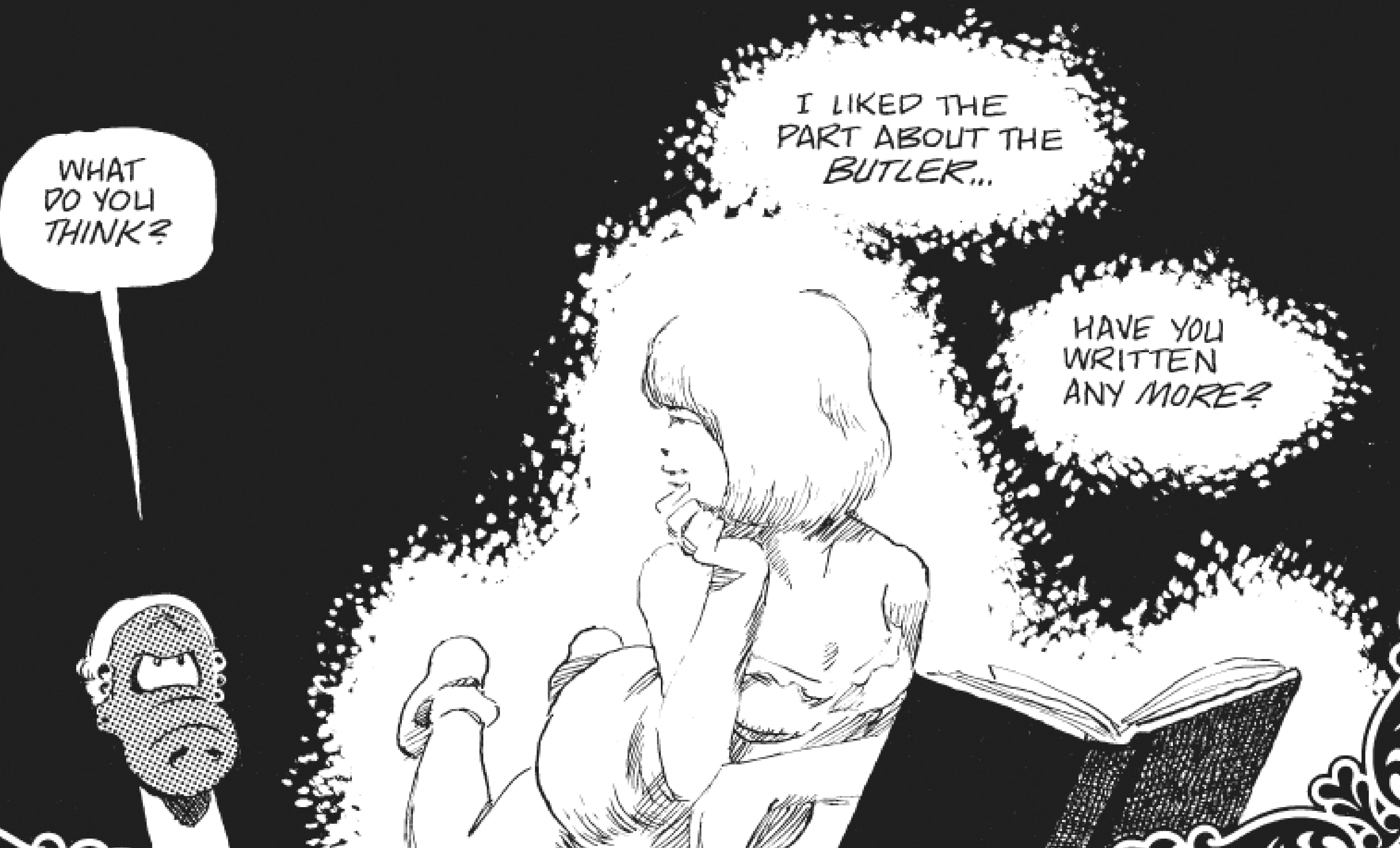
Teamwork and loyalty are the cornerstones of good government.



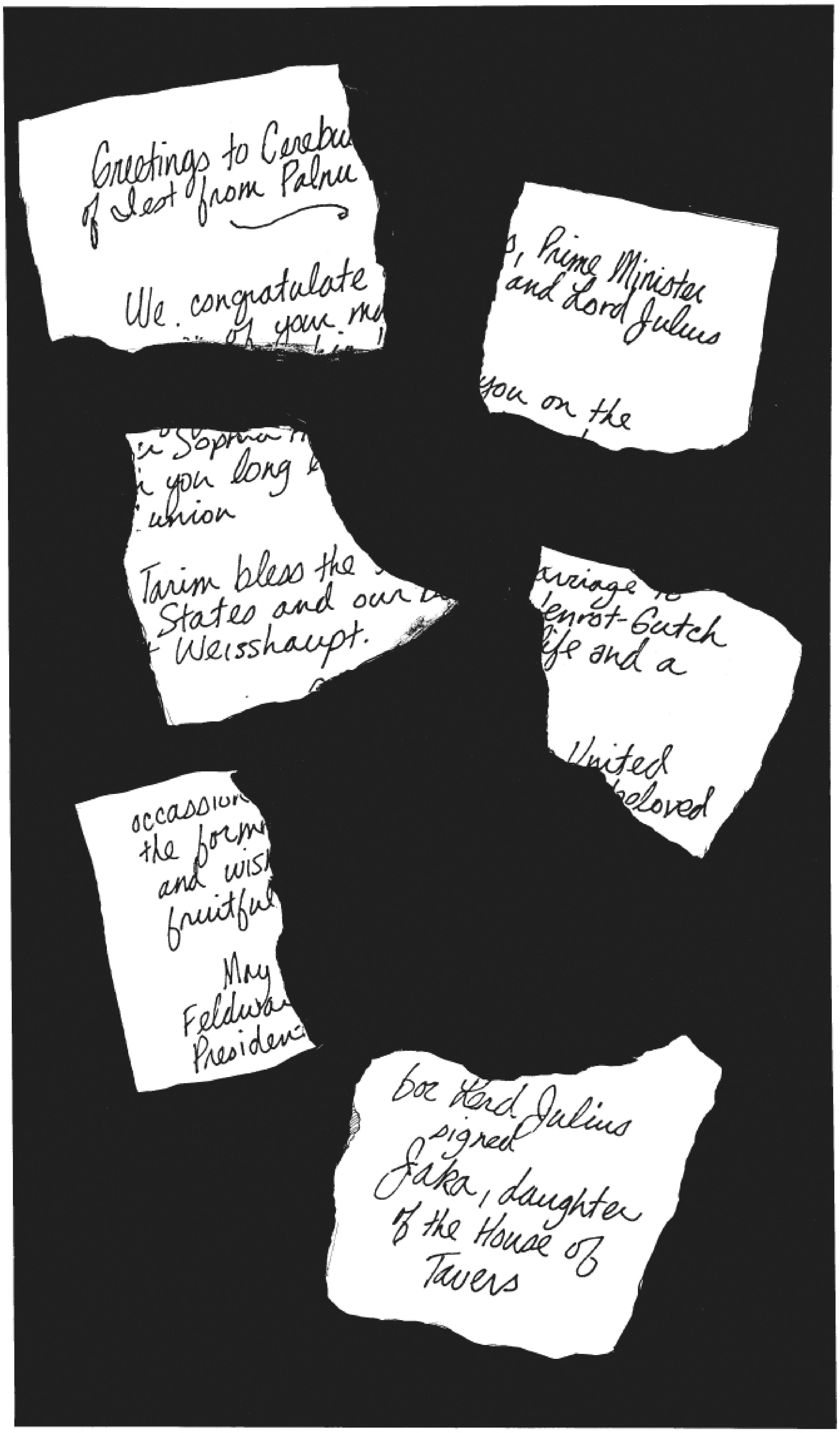
Like, for instance, there was nothing Cerebus could do about the economy. Lord Julius set the interest rates and decided how much Iest's crown was worth. As soon as the staff and Cerebus' cabinet realized that everything wrong with the economy was Lord Julius' fault, we started having more meetings about it. Cerebus would say "What are we going to do about high interest rates?" Everyone would shrug and say "What *can* we do? Lord Julius is the one who sets the rate." Cerebus would look thoughtful and say "That's true. Our hands are tied." Then everyone would nod and shrug their shoulders at once.

Unity is another cornerstone of good government

Once some new guy said "Why don't we try to beat Lord Julius at his own game?" Cerebus threw a paperweight at him and knocked him cold. The next meeting we had on the economy, he shrugged and nodded in all the right places so Cerebus had his wife and children released and dropped the treason charge against him.


WHAT DO YOU *THINK*?
I LIKED THE PART ABOUT THE *BUTLER*...
HAVE YOU WRITTEN ANY *MORE*?

note



Greetings to Cerebu
of Iest from Palnu

We. congratulate
of you m

, Prime Minister
and Lord Julius

you on the

Sophia
you long
union

Tarim bless the
States and our
Weisshaupt.

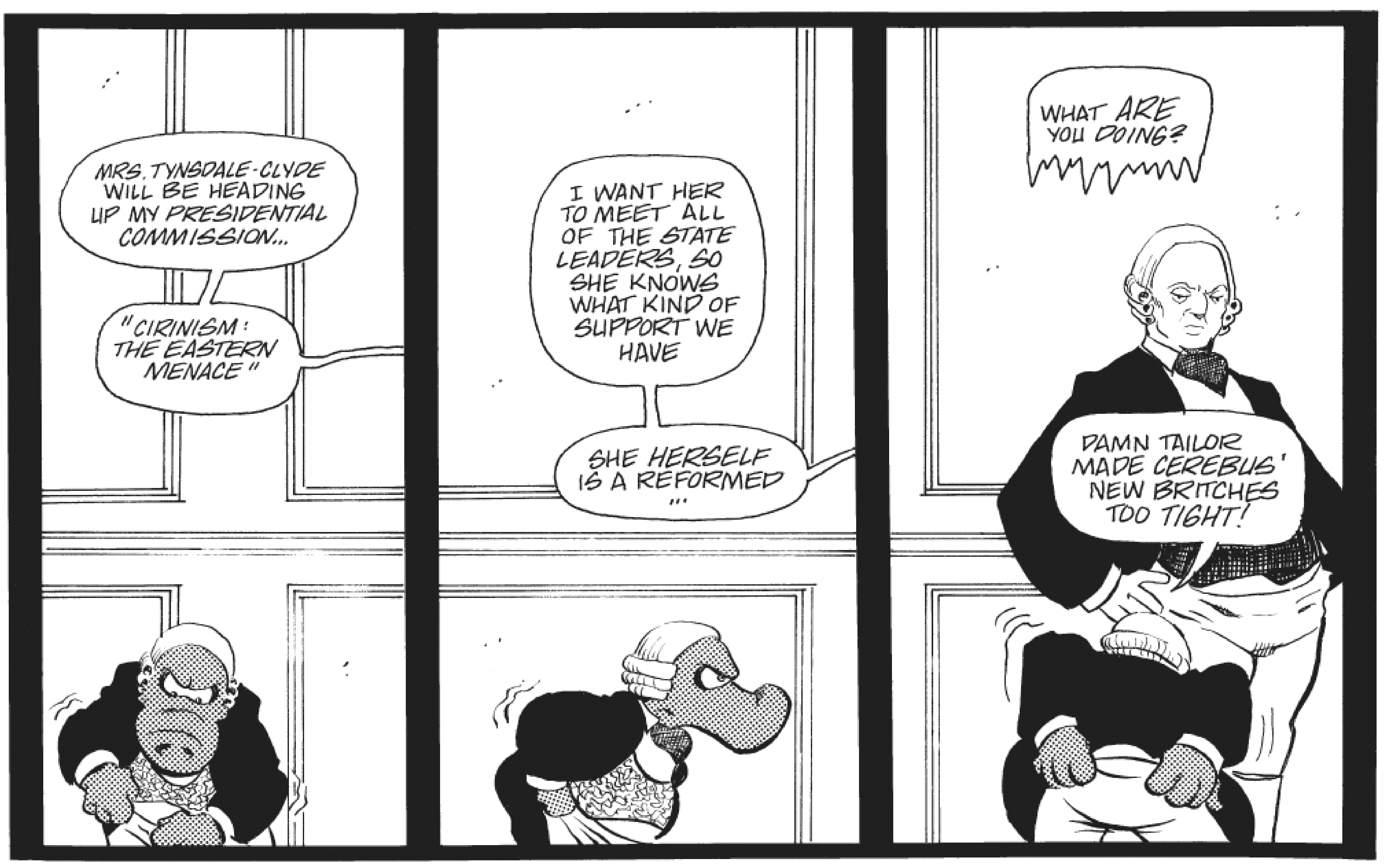
arriage to
Jenrot-Gutch
ife and a

United
beloved

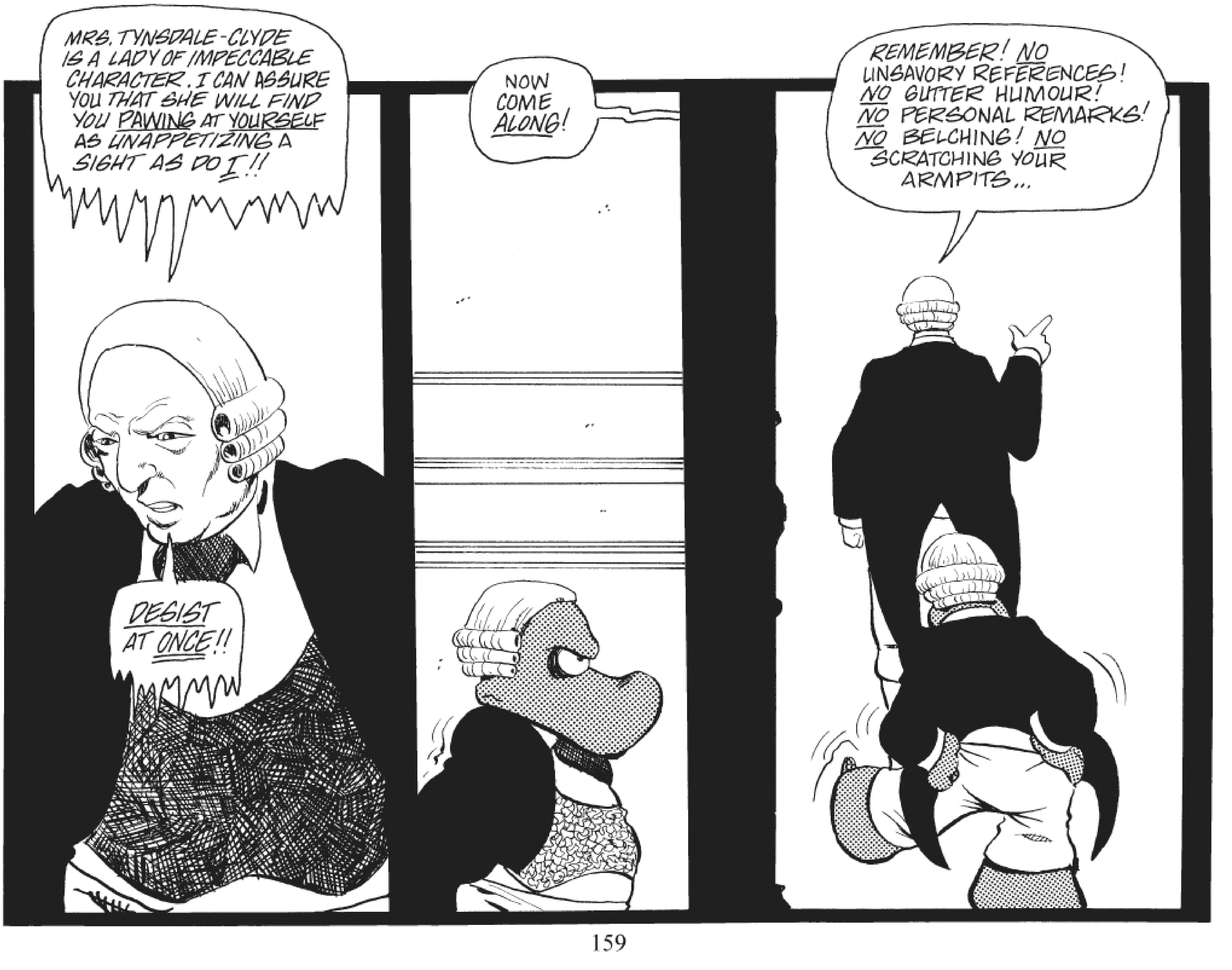
occassion
the form
and wish
fruitful

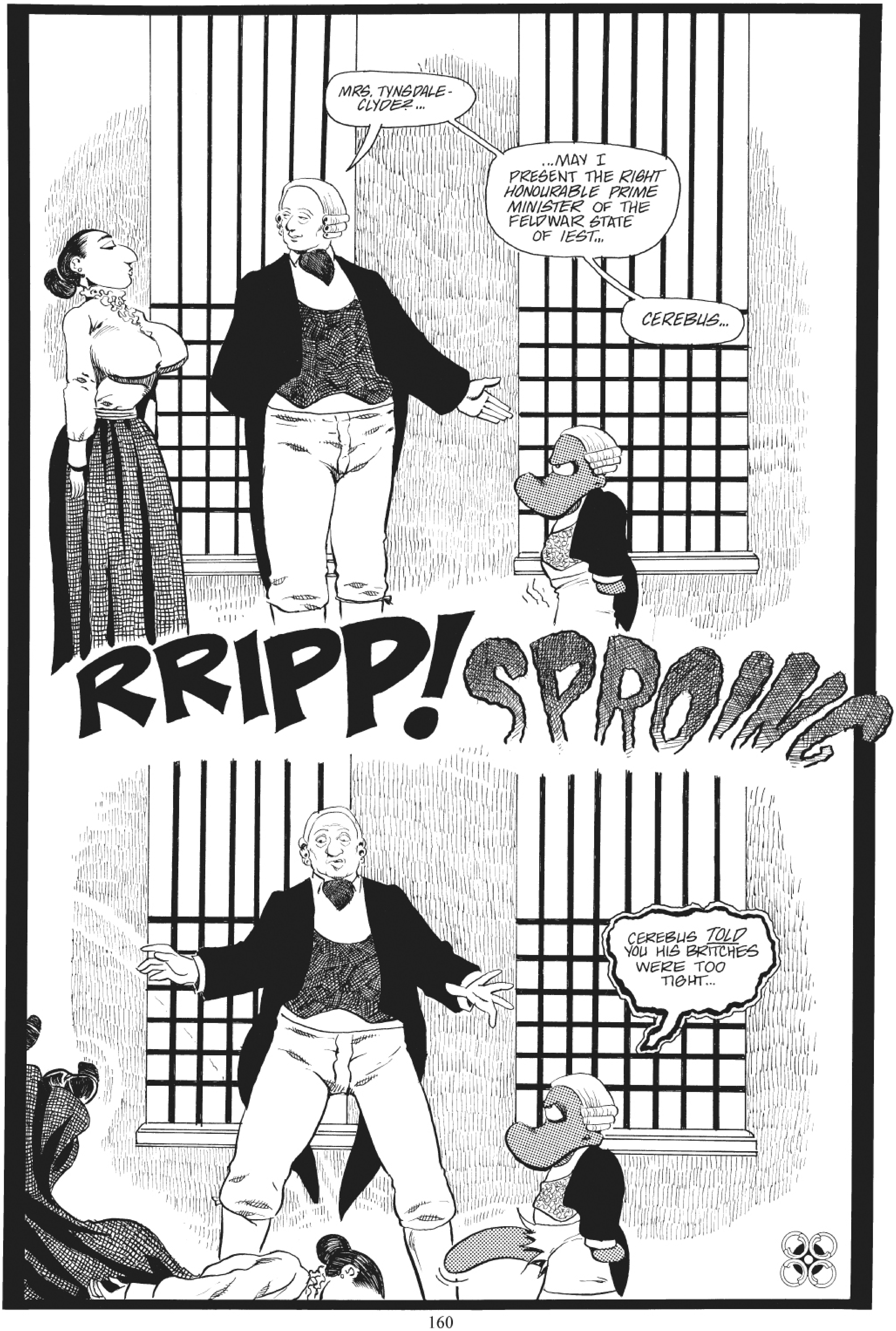
May
Feldwa
Presiden

boc Lord Julius
signed
Jaka, daughter
of the House of
Tavers

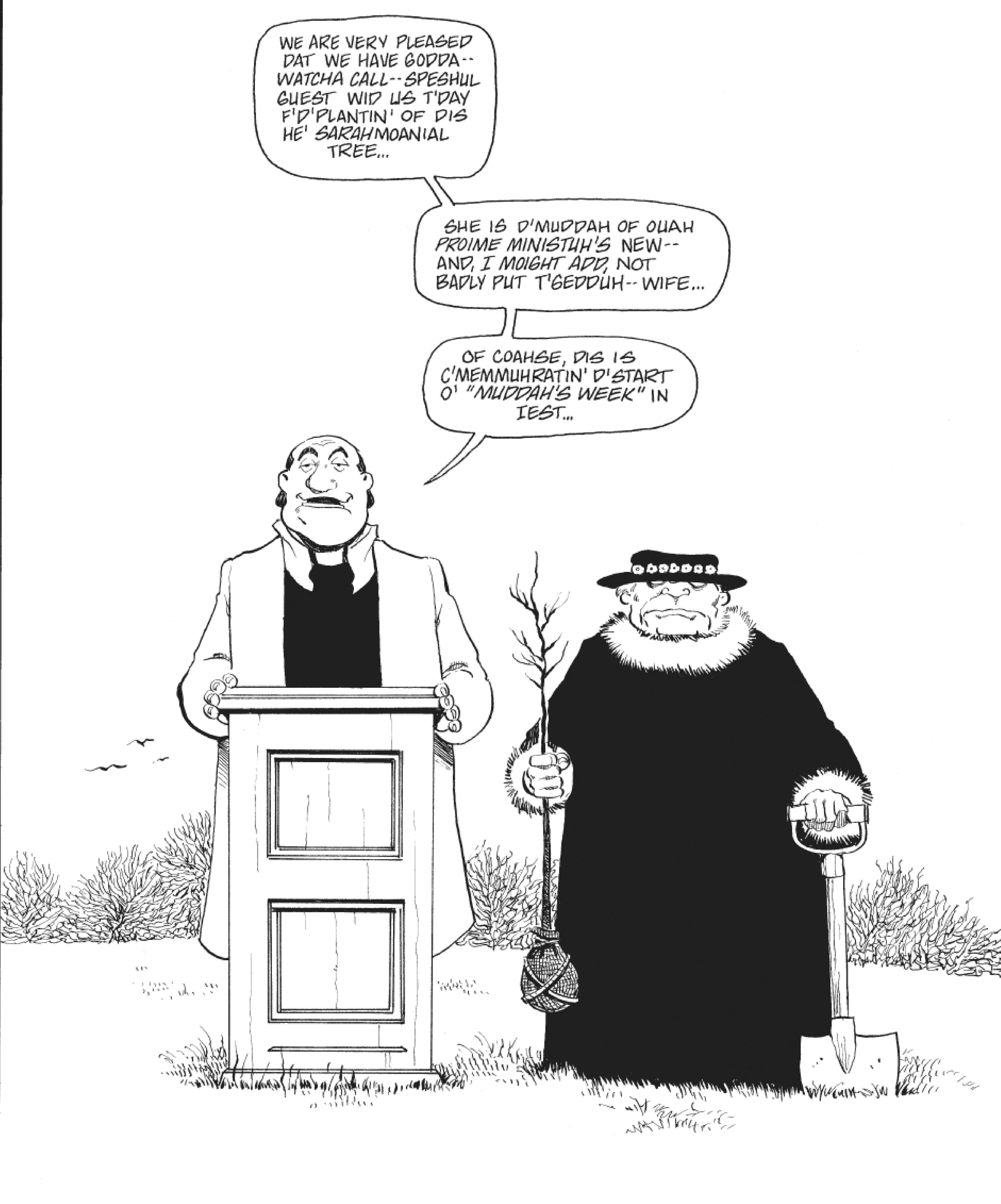

MRS. TYNSDALE-CLYDE WILL BE HEADING UP MY PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION...
"CIRINISM: THE EASTERN MENACE"
I WANT HER TO MEET ALL OF THE STATE LEADERS, SO SHE KNOWS WHAT KIND OF SUPPORT WE HAVE
SHE HERSELF IS A REFORMED ...
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
DAMN TAILOR MADE CEREBUS' NEW BRITCHES TOO TIGHT!

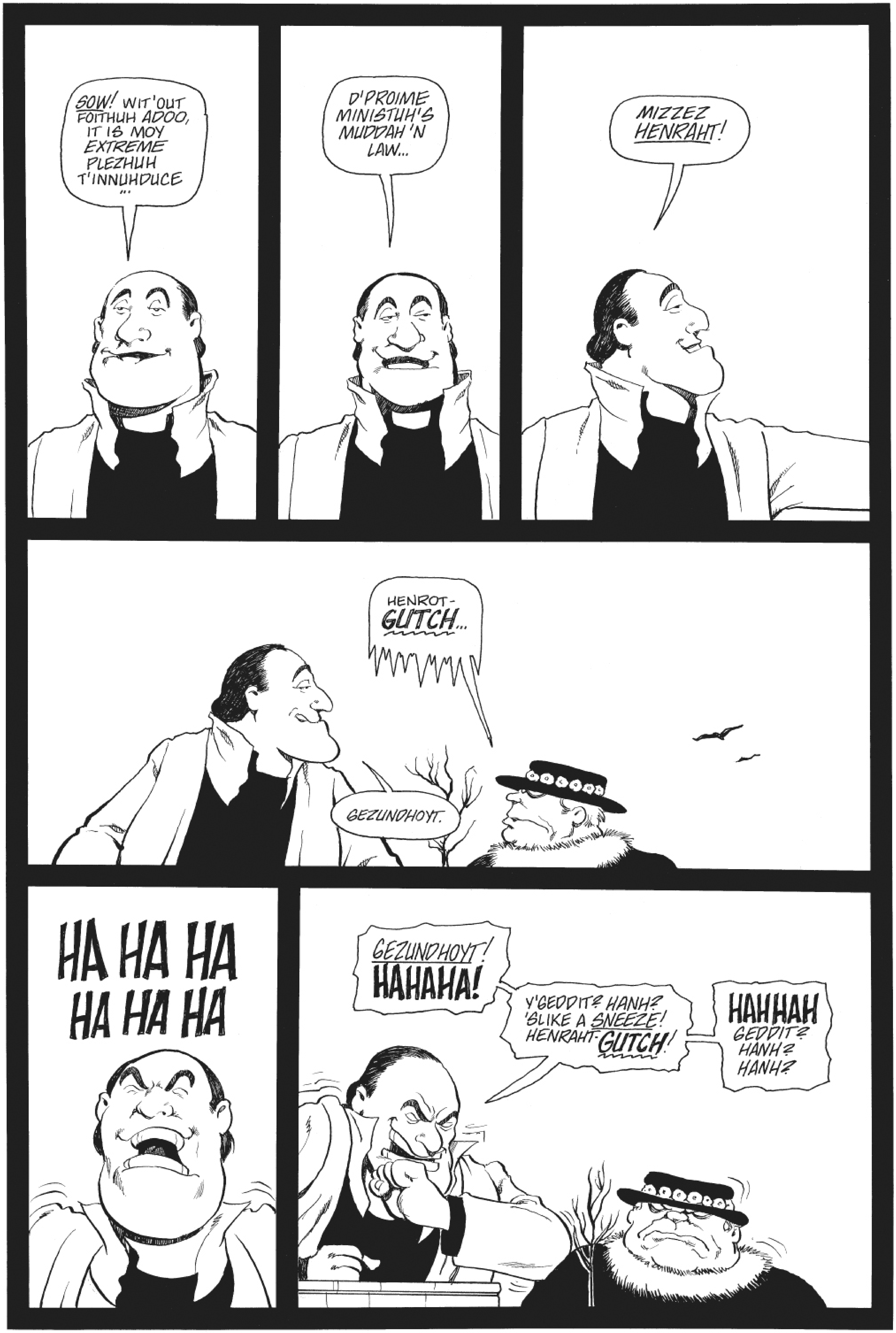
FIRST IMPRESSION

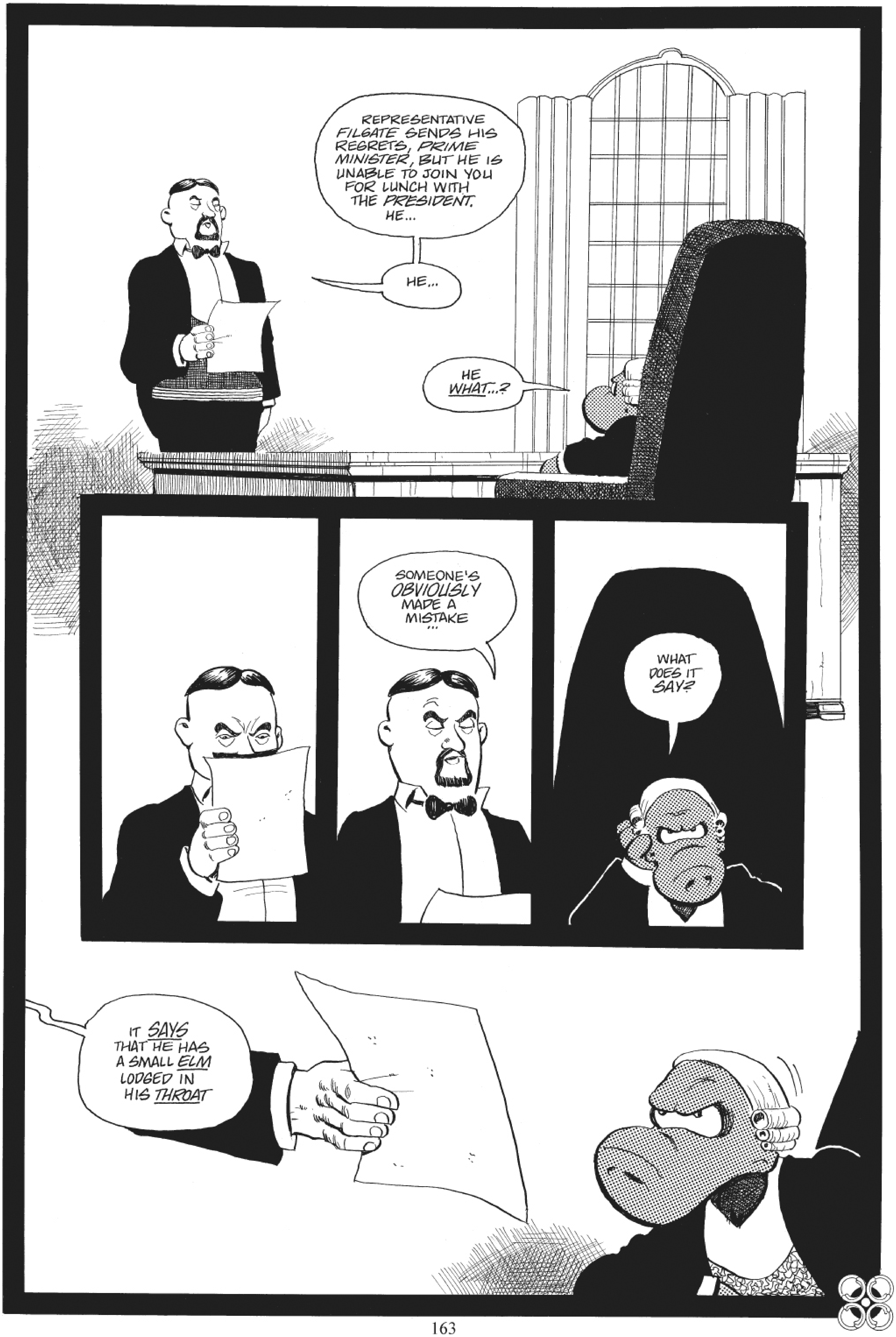

MRS. TYNSDALE-CLYDE IS A LADY OF IMPECCABLE CHARACTER. I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT SHE WILL FIND YOU PAWING AT YOURSELF AS UNAPPETIZING A SIGHT AS DO I!!
DESIST AT ONCE!!
NOW COME ALONG!
REMEMBER! NO UNSAVORY REFERENCES! NO GUTTER HUMOUR! NO PERSONAL REMARKS! NO BELCHING! NO SCRATCHING YOUR ARMPITS...


MRS. TYNGDALE-CLYDER...
...MAY I PRESENT THE RIGHT HONOURABLE PRIME MINISTER OF THE FELDWAR STATE OF IEST...
CEREBUS...
RRIPP!
SPROING
CEREBUS TOLD YOU HIS BRITCHES WERE TOO TIGHT...

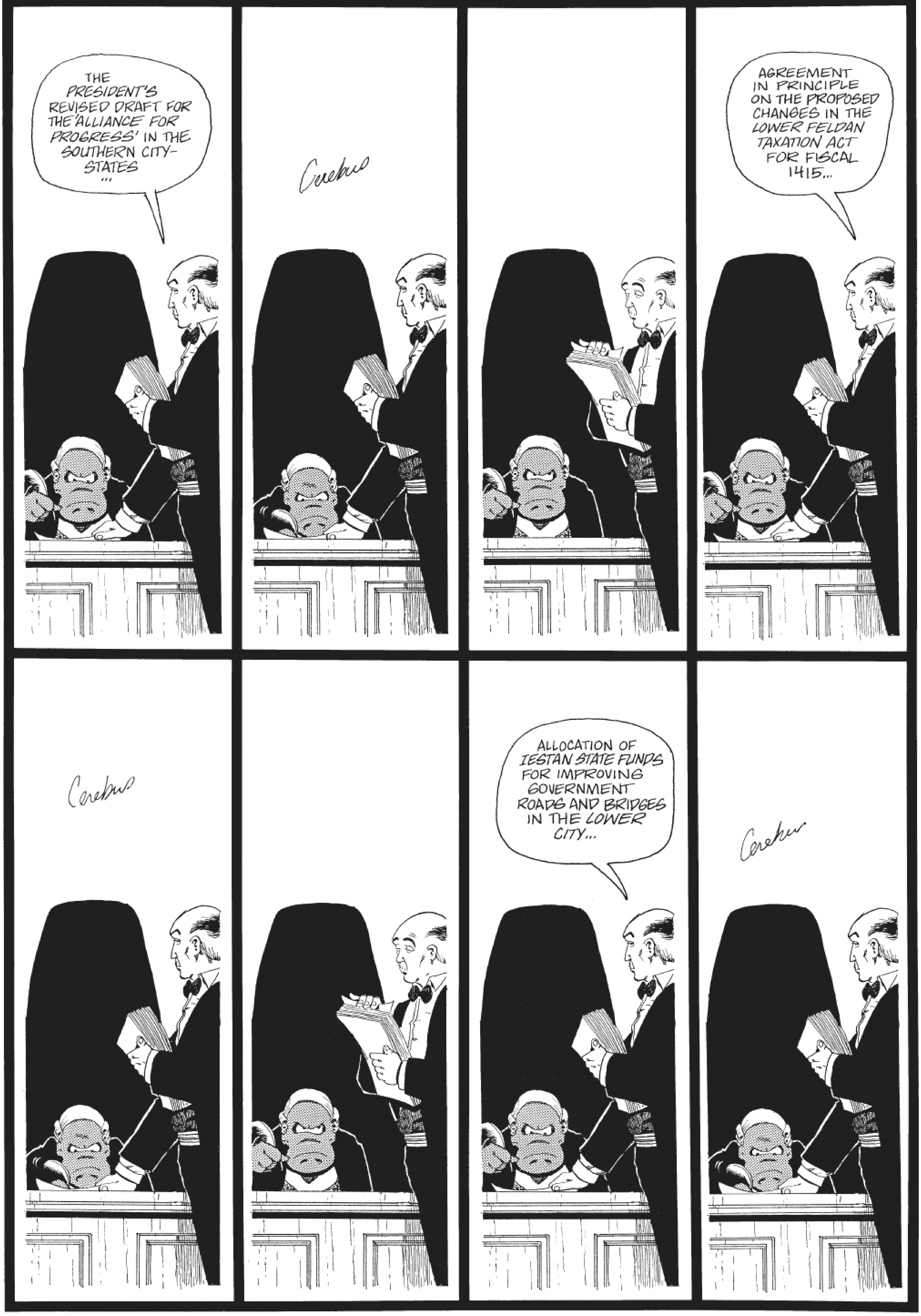
TREE PLANTING

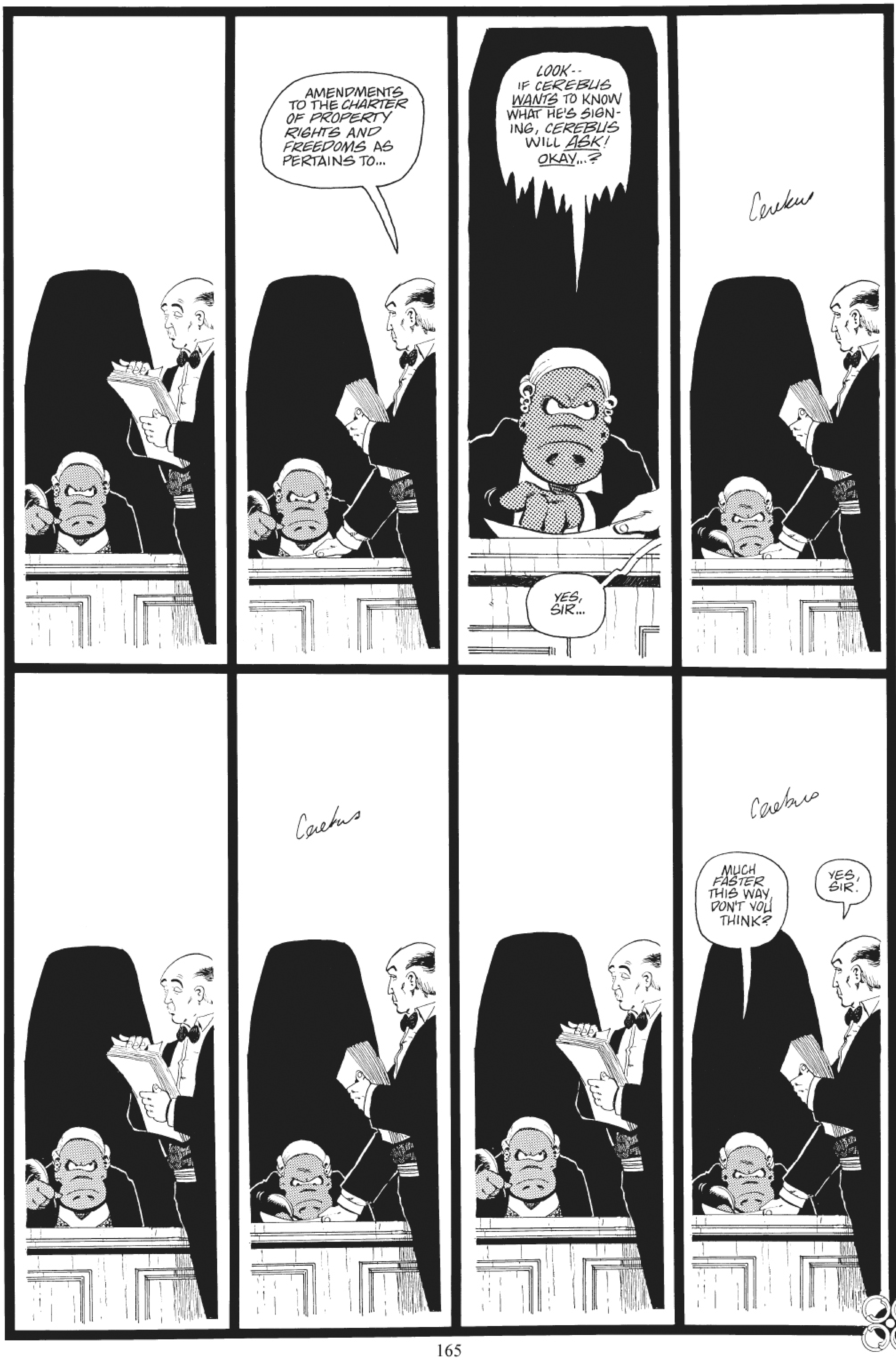

WE ARE VERY PLEASED DAT WE HAVE GODDA--WATCHA CALL--SPESHUL GUEST WID US T'DAY F'D'PLANTIN' OF DIS HE' SARAHMOANIAL TREE...
SHE IS D'MUDDAH OF OUAH PROIME MINISTUH'S NEW--AND, I MOIGHT ADD, NOT BADLY PUT T'GEDDUH--WIFE...
OF COAHSE, DIS IS C'MEMMUHRATIN' D'START O' "MUDDAH'S WEEK" IN IEST...


SOW! WIT'OUT FOITHUH ADOO, IT IS MOY EXTREME PLEZHUH T'INNUHDUCE ...
D'PROIME MINISTUH'S MUDDAH 'N LAW...
MIZZEZ HENRAHT!
HENROT-GUTCH...
GEZUNDHOYT.
HA HA HA HA HA HA
GEZUNDHOYT! HAHAHA!
Y'GEDDIT? HANH? 'SLIKE A SNEEZE! HENRAHT-GUTCH!
HAHHAH GEDDIT? HANH? HANH?

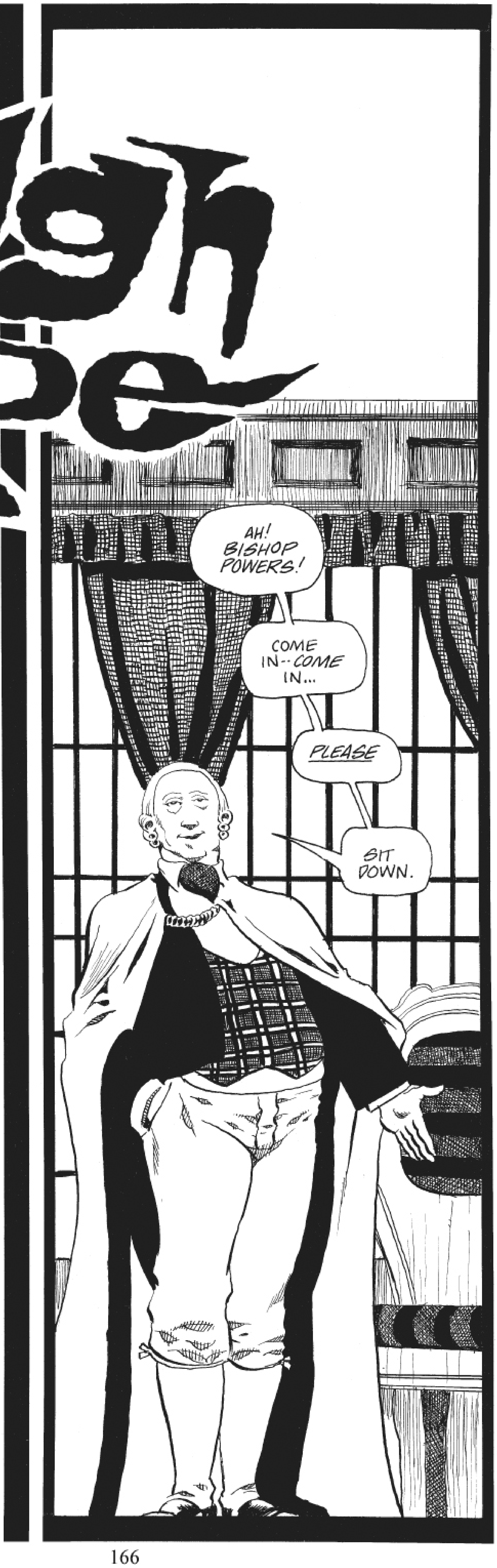

REPRESENTATIVE FILGATE SENDS HIS REGRETS, PRIME MINISTER, BUT HE IS UNABLE TO JOIN YOU FOR LUNCH WITH THE PRESIDENT. HE...
HE...
HE WHAT...?
SOMEONE'S OBVIOUSLY MADE A MISTAKE ...
WHAT DOES IT SAY?
IT SAYS THAT HE HAS A SMALL ELM LODGED IN HIS THROAT

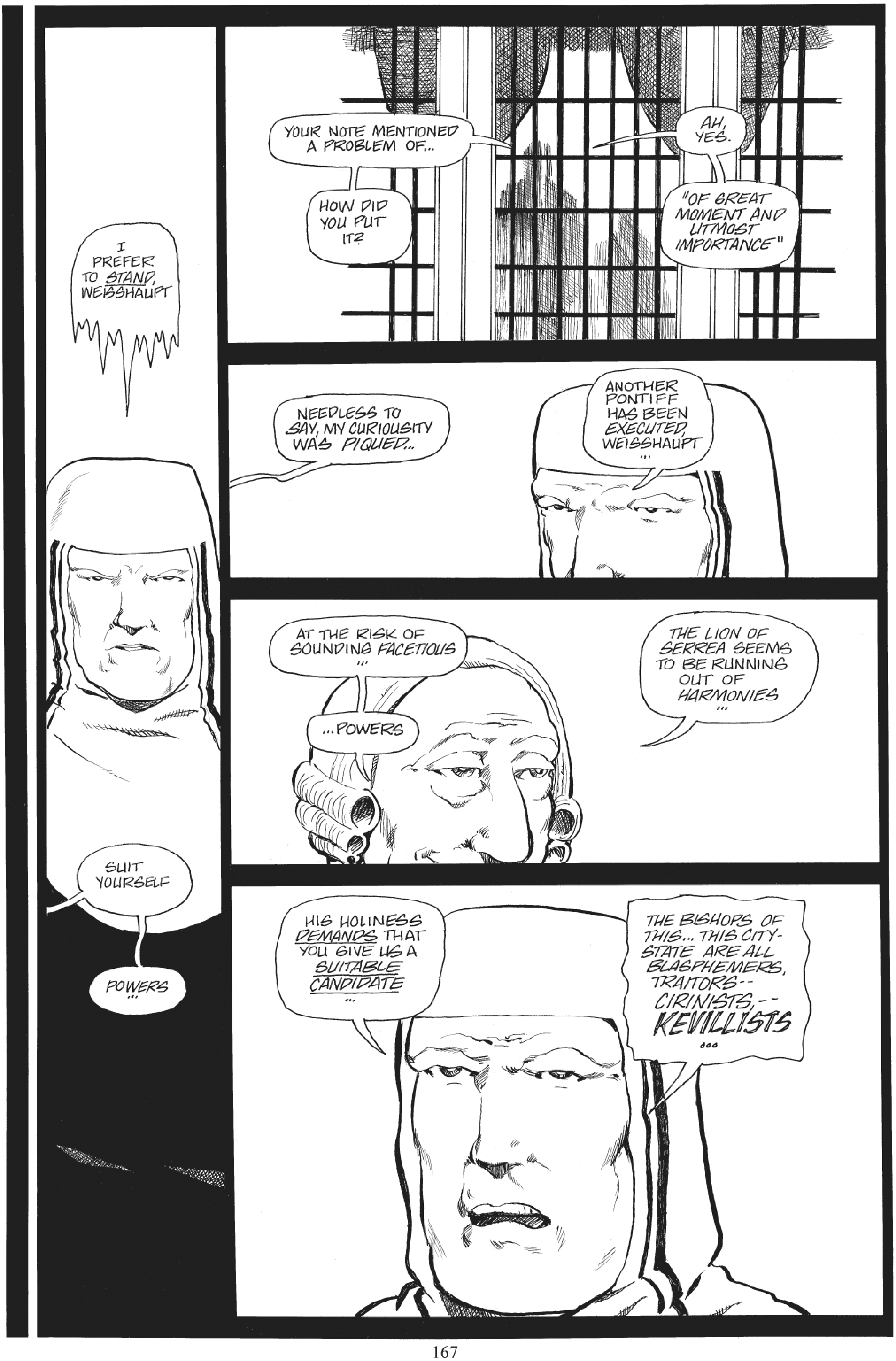
APPROVED·BY

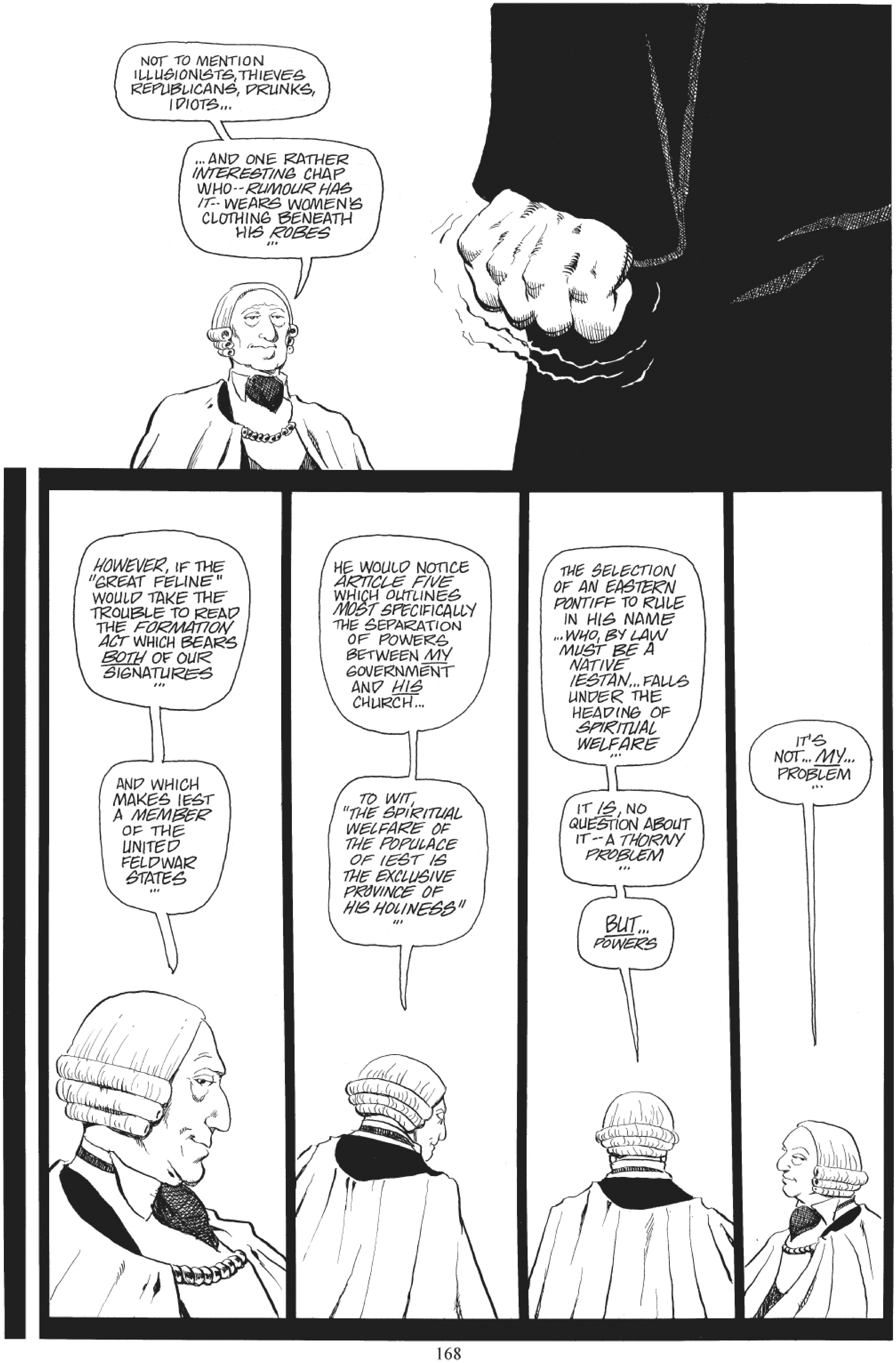

THE PRESIDENT'S REVISED DRAFT FOR THE 'ALLIANCE FOR PROGRESS' IN THE SOUTHERN CITY-STATES ...
Cerebus
AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE ON THE PROPOSED CHANGES IN THE LOWER FELDAN TAXATION ACT FOR FISCAL 1415...
Cerebus
ALLOCATION OF IESTAN STATE FUNDS FOR IMPROVING GOVERNMENT ROADS AND BRIDGES IN THE LOWER CITY...
Cerebus

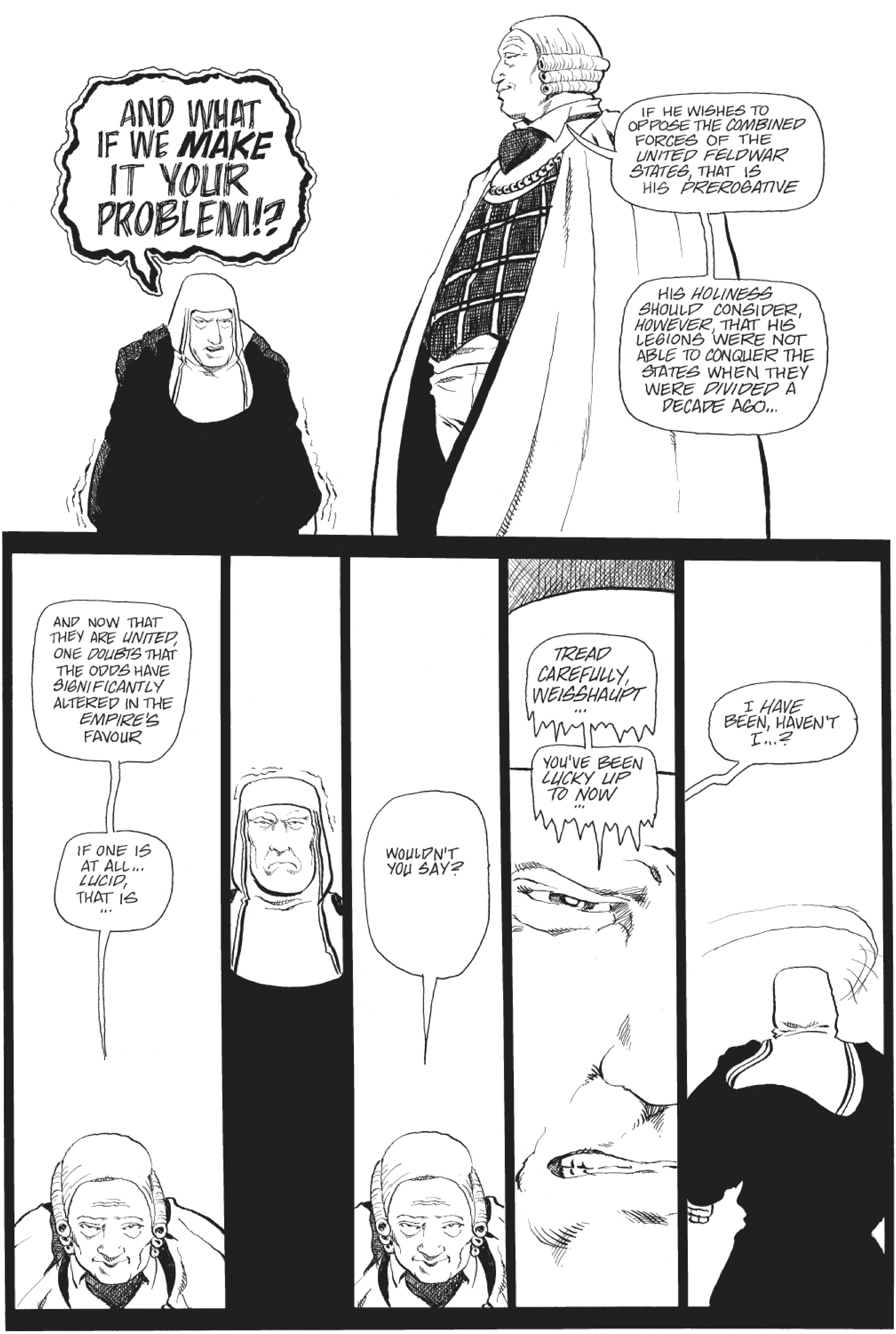

AMENDMENTS TO THE CHARTER OF PROPERTY RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS AS PERTAINS TO...
LOOK-- IF CEREBUS WANTS TO KNOW WHAT HE'S SIGNING, CEREBUS WILL ASK! OKAY...?
YES, SIR...
Cerebus
Cerebus
Cerebus
MUCH FASTER THIS WAY, DON'T YOU THINK?
YES, SIR.

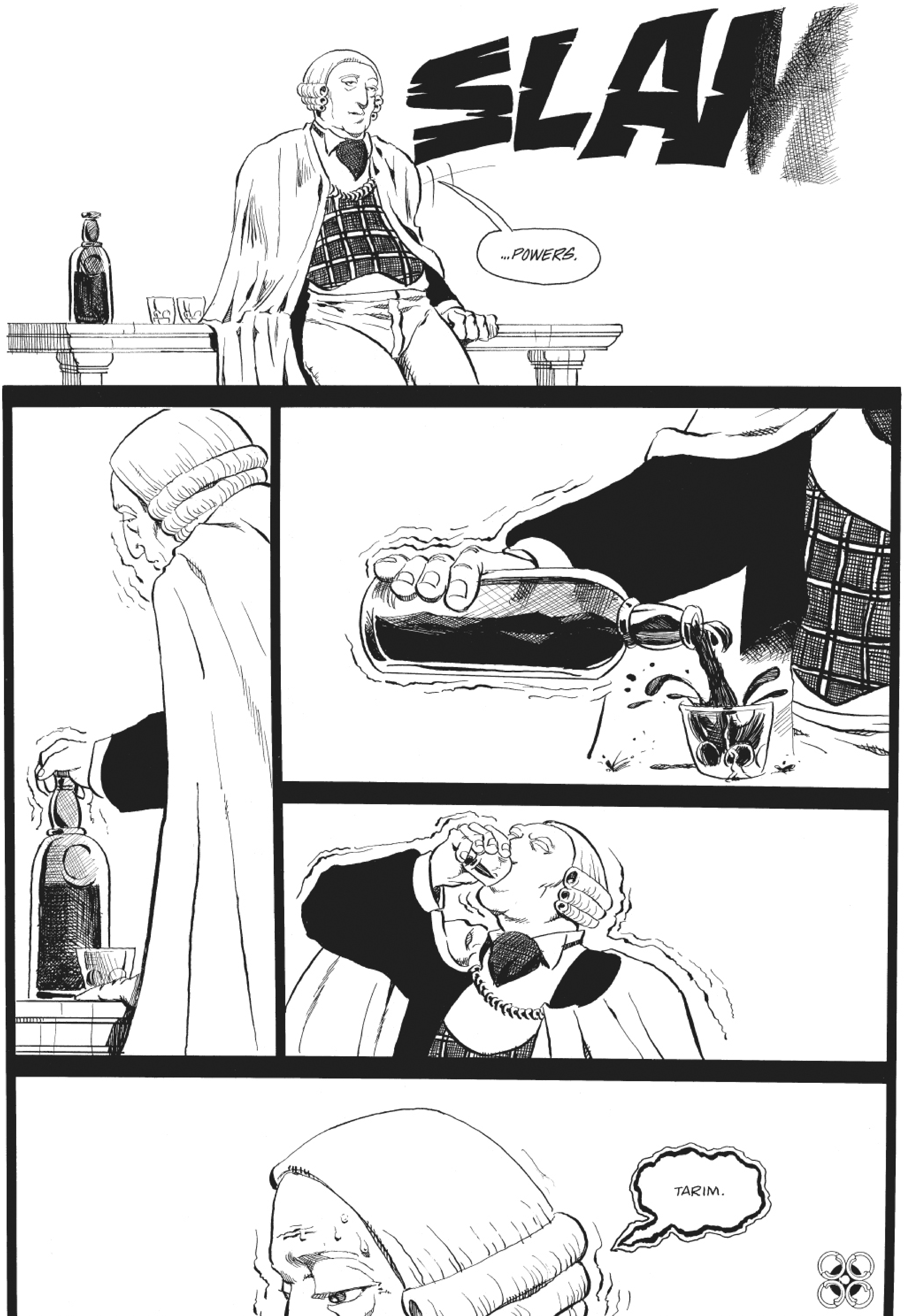
Rough Pope


AH! BISHOP POWERS!
COME IN--COME IN...
PLEASE
SIT DOWN.

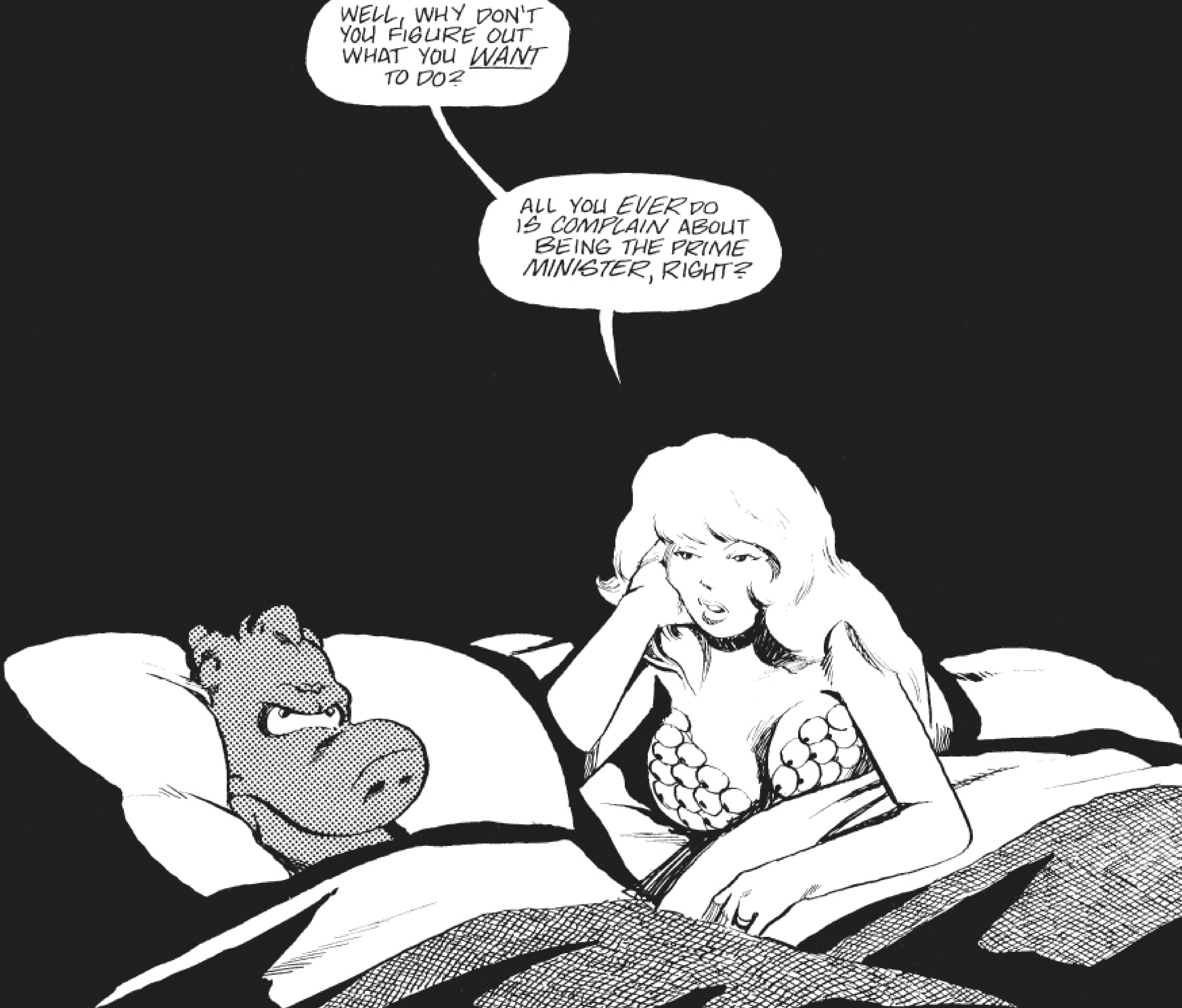

YOUR NOTE MENTIONED A PROBLEM OF...
HOW DID YOU PUT IT?
AH, YES.
"OF GREAT MOMENT AND UTMOST IMPORTANCE"
I PREFER TO STAND, WEISSHAUPT
NEEDLESS TO SAY, MY CURIOUSITY WAS PIQUED...
ANOTHER PONTIFF HAS BEEN EXECUTED, WEISSHAUPT ...
AT THE RISK OF SOUNDING FACETIOUS ...
...POWERS
THE LION OF SERREA SEEMS TO BE RUNNING OUT OF HARMONIES ...
SUIT YOURSELF
POWERS ...
HIS HOLINESS DEMANDS THAT YOU GIVE US A SUITABLE CANDIDATE ...
THE BISHOPS OF THIS... THIS CITY-STATE ARE ALL BLASPHEMERS, TRAITORS-- CIRINISTS,-- KEVILLISTS ...

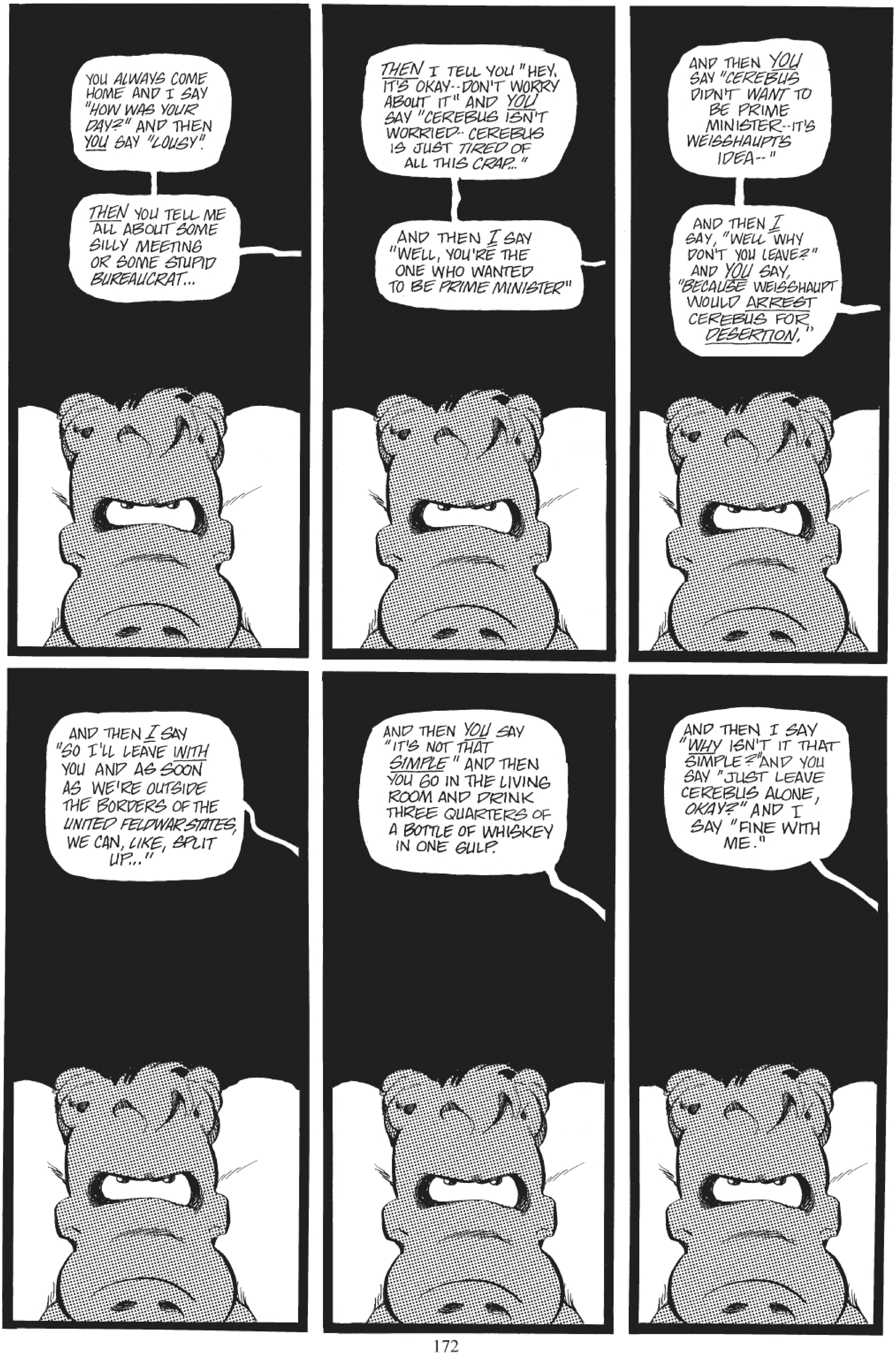

NOT TO MENTION ILLUSIONISTS, THIEVES REPUBLICANS, DRUNKS, IDIOTS...
...AND ONE RATHER INTERESTING CHAP WHO--RUMOUR HAS IT--WEARS WOMEN'S CLOTHING BENEATH HIS ROBES...
HOWEVER, IF THE "GREAT FELINE" WOULD TAKE THE TROUBLE TO READ THE FORMATION ACT WHICH BEARS BOTH OF OUR SIGNATURES...
AND WHICH MAKES IEST A MEMBER OF THE UNITED FELDWAR STATES...
HE WOULD NOTICE ARTICLE FIVE WHICH OUTLINES MOST SPECIFICALLY THE SEPARATION OF POWERS BETWEEN MY GOVERNMENT AND HIS CHURCH...
TO WIT, "THE SPIRITUAL WELFARE OF THE POPULACE OF IEST IS THE EXCLUSIVE PROVINCE OF HIS HOLINESS"...
THE SELECTION OF AN EASTERN PONTIFF TO RULE IN HIS NAME ...WHO, BY LAW MUST BE A NATIVE IESTAN... FALLS UNDER THE HEADING OF SPIRITUAL WELFARE...
IT IS, NO QUESTION ABOUT IT--A THORNY PROBLEM...
BUT... POWERS
IT'S NOT... MY... PROBLEM...

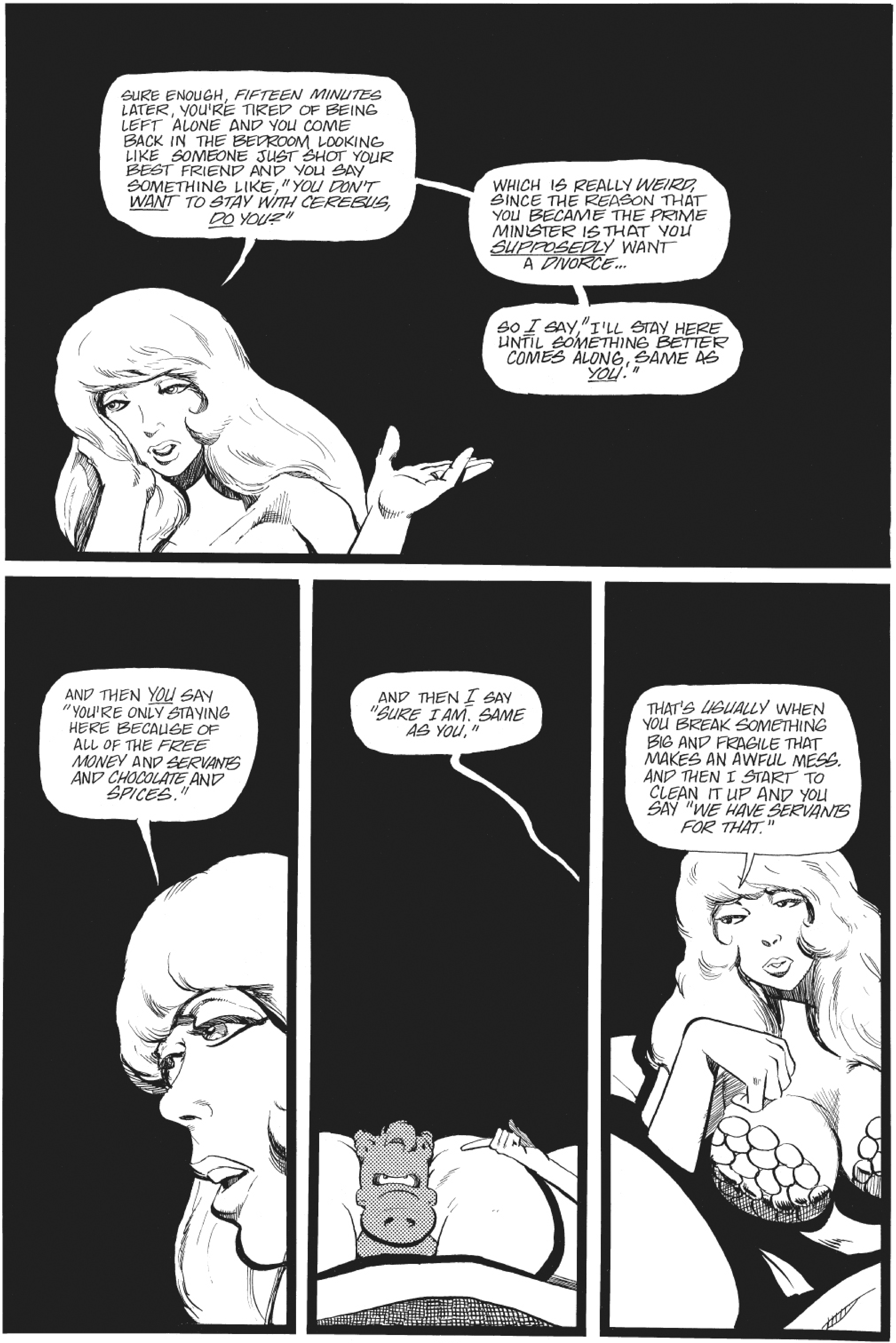

AND WHAT IF WE *MAKE* IT YOUR PROBLEM!?
IF HE WISHES TO OPPOSE THE *COMBINED* FORCES OF THE *UNITED FELDWAR STATES*, THAT IS HIS *PREROGATIVE*
HIS *HOLINESS* SHOULD CONSIDER, *HOWEVER*, THAT HIS LEGIONS WERE NOT ABLE TO CONQUER THE STATES WHEN THEY WERE *DIVIDED* A DECADE AGO...
AND NOW THAT THEY ARE *UNITED*, ONE *DOUBTS* THAT THE ODDS HAVE *SIGNIFICANTLY* ALTERED IN THE *EMPIRE'S* FAVOUR
IF ONE IS AT ALL... *LUCID*, THAT IS ...
WOULDN'T YOU SAY?
TREAD CAREFULLY, WEISSHAUPT ...
YOU'VE BEEN *LUCKY* UP TO NOW ...
I *HAVE* BEEN, HAVEN'T I...?

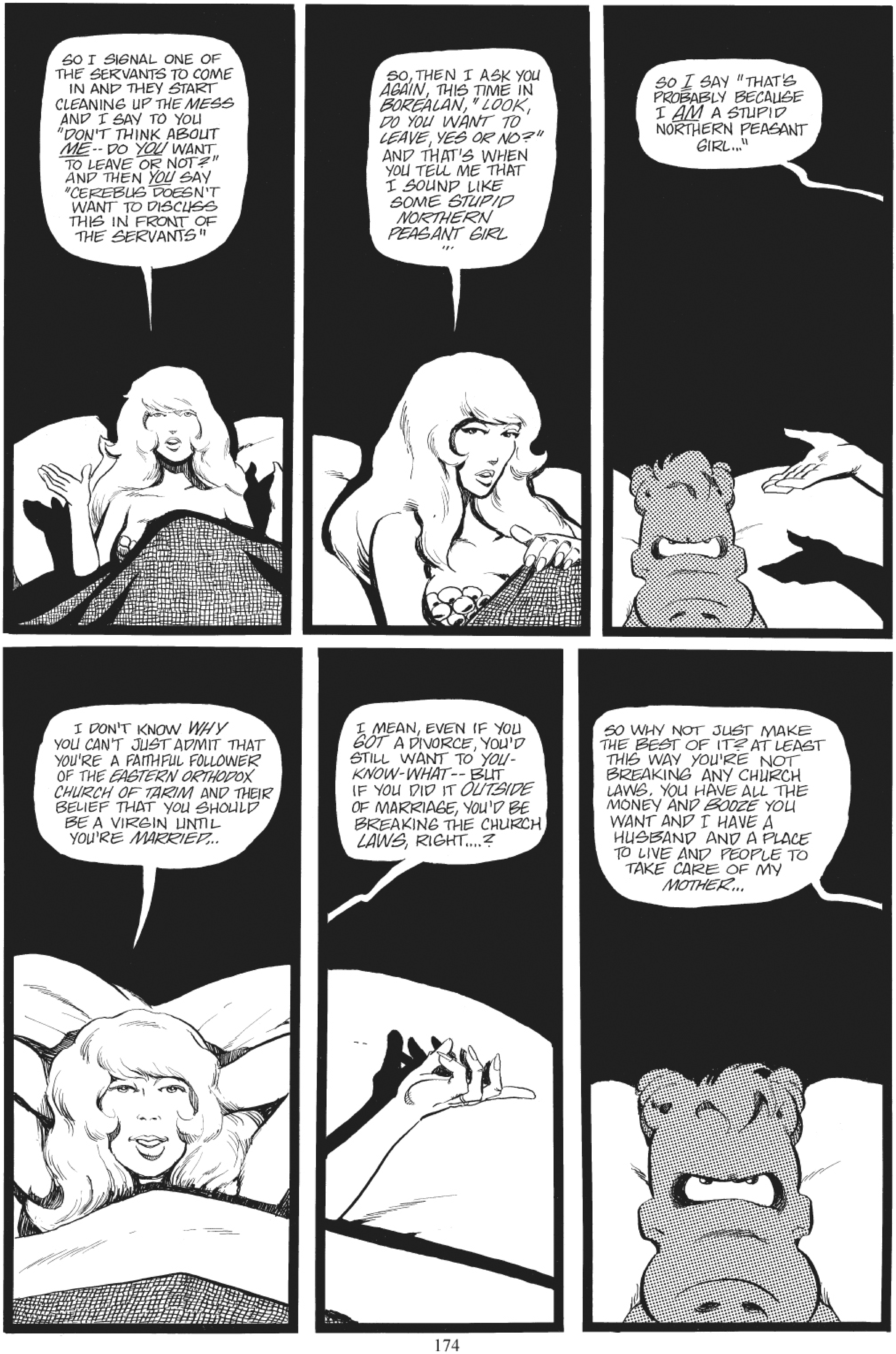

SLAM
...POWERS.
TARIM.

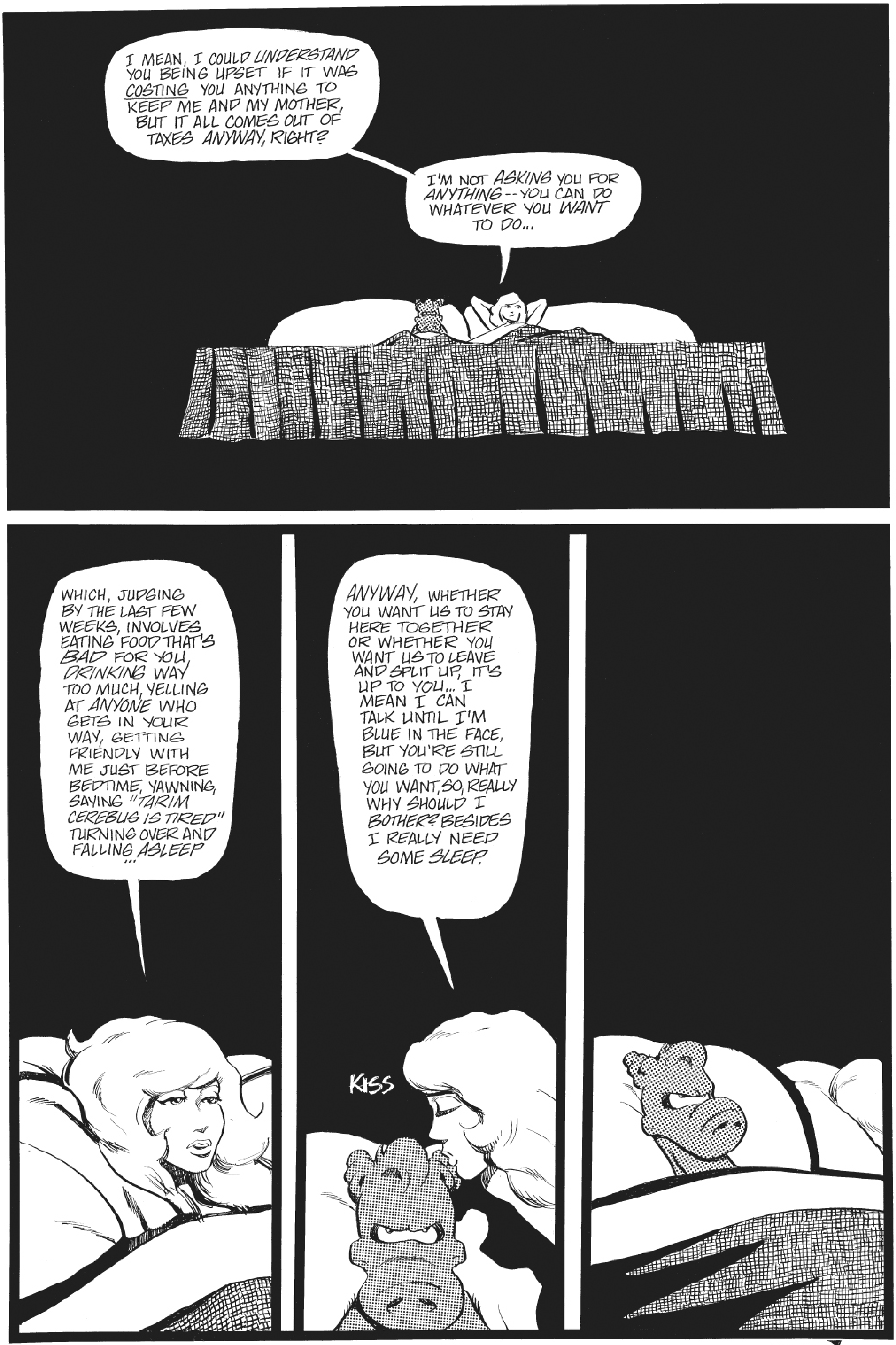
SOPHIA


WELL, WHY DON'T YOU FIGURE OUT WHAT YOU *WANT* TO DO?
ALL YOU *EVER* DO IS *COMPLAIN* ABOUT BEING THE PRIME *MINISTER*, RIGHT?

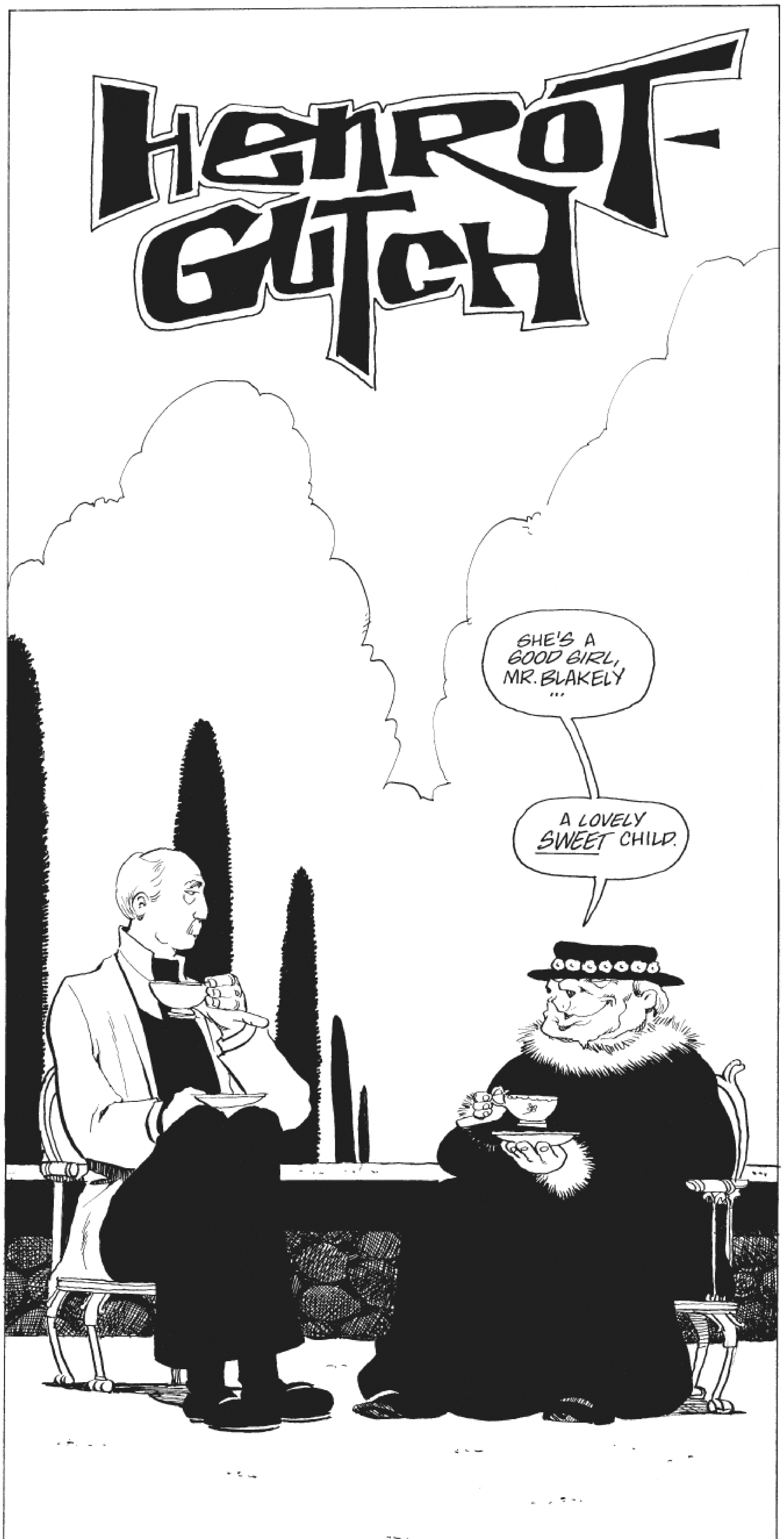

YOU ALWAYS COME HOME AND I SAY "HOW WAS YOUR DAY?" AND THEN YOU SAY "LOUSY".
THEN YOU TELL ME ALL ABOUT SOME SILLY MEETING OR SOME STUPID BUREAUCRAT...
THEN I TELL YOU "HEY, IT'S OKAY--DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT" AND YOU SAY "CEREBUS ISN'T WORRIED-- CEREBUS IS JUST TIRED OF ALL THIS CRAP..."
AND THEN I SAY "WELL, YOU'RE THE ONE WHO WANTED TO BE PRIME MINISTER"
AND THEN YOU SAY "CEREBUS DIDN'T WANT TO BE PRIME MINISTER--IT'S WEISSHAUPT'S IDEA--"
AND THEN I SAY, "WELL WHY DON'T YOU LEAVE?" AND YOU SAY, "BECAUSE WEISSHAUPT WOULD ARREST CEREBUS FOR DESERTION."
AND THEN I SAY "SO I'LL LEAVE WITH YOU AND AS SOON AS WE'RE OUTSIDE THE BORDERS OF THE UNITED FELDWAR STATES, WE CAN, LIKE, SPLIT UP..."
AND THEN YOU SAY "IT'S NOT THAT SIMPLE" AND THEN YOU GO IN THE LIVING ROOM AND DRINK THREE QUARTERS OF A BOTTLE OF WHISKEY IN ONE GULP.
AND THEN I SAY "WHY ISN'T IT THAT SIMPLE?" AND YOU SAY "JUST LEAVE CEREBUS ALONE, OKAY?" AND I SAY "FINE WITH ME."

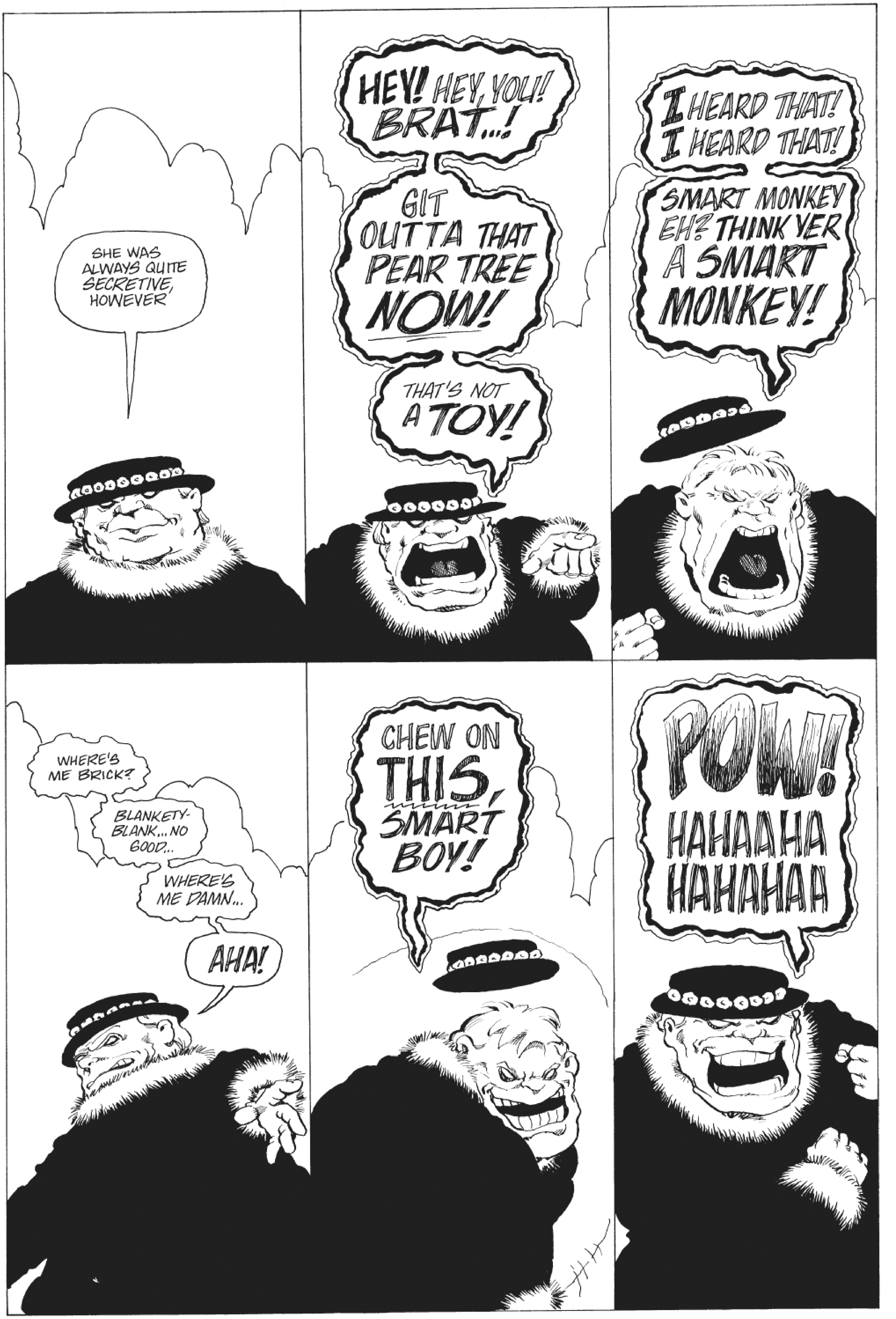

SURE ENOUGH, FIFTEEN MINUTES LATER, YOU'RE TIRED OF BEING LEFT ALONE AND YOU COME BACK IN THE BEDROOM LOOKING LIKE SOMEONE JUST SHOT YOUR BEST FRIEND AND YOU SAY SOMETHING LIKE, "YOU DON'T WANT TO STAY WITH CEREBUS, DO YOU?"
WHICH IS REALLY WEIRD, SINCE THE REASON THAT YOU BECAME THE PRIME MINISTER IS THAT YOU SUPPOSEDLY WANT A DIVORCE...
SO I SAY, "I'LL STAY HERE UNTIL SOMETHING BETTER COMES ALONG, SAME AS YOU!"
AND THEN YOU SAY "YOU'RE ONLY STAYING HERE BECAUSE OF ALL OF THE FREE MONEY AND SERVANTS AND CHOCOLATE AND SPICES."
AND THEN I SAY "SURE I AM. SAME AS YOU."
THAT'S USUALLY WHEN YOU BREAK SOMETHING BIG AND FRAGILE THAT MAKES AN AWFUL MESS. AND THEN I START TO CLEAN IT UP AND YOU SAY "WE HAVE SERVANTS FOR THAT."

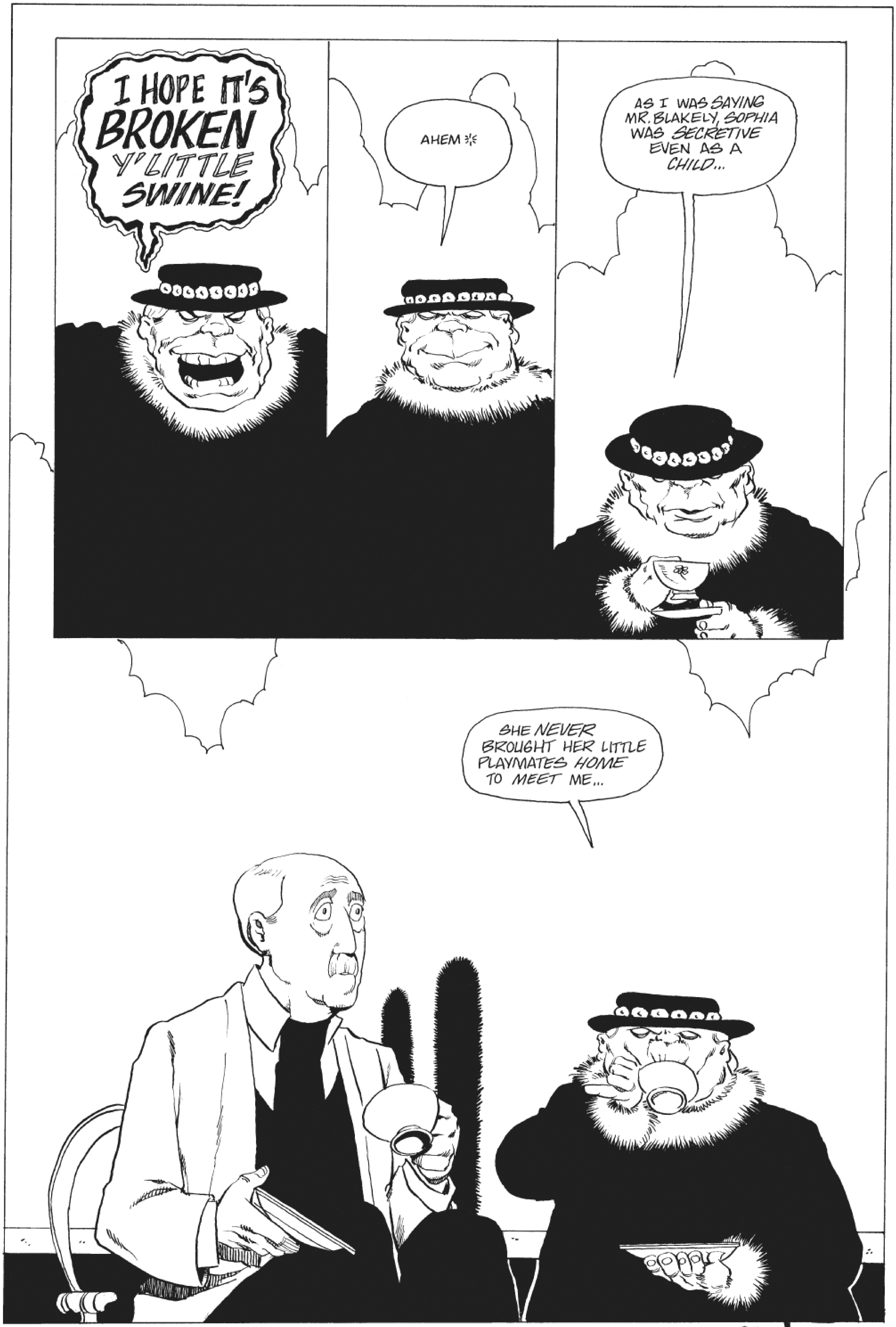

SO I SIGNAL ONE OF THE SERVANTS TO COME IN AND THEY START CLEANING UP THE *MESS* AND I SAY TO YOU "DON'T THINK ABOUT *ME*-- DO *YOU* WANT TO LEAVE OR NOT?" AND THEN *YOU* SAY "CEREBUS DOESN'T WANT TO DISCUSS THIS IN FRONT OF THE SERVANTS"
SO, THEN I ASK YOU *AGAIN*, THIS TIME IN *BOREALAN*," *LOOK, DO YOU WANT TO LEAVE, YES OR NO?*" AND THAT'S WHEN YOU TELL ME THAT I SOUND LIKE SOME *STUPID NORTHERN PEASANT GIRL*"
SO *I* SAY "THAT'S PROBABLY BECAUSE I *AM* A STUPID NORTHERN PEASANT GIRL..."
I DON'T KNOW *WHY* YOU CAN'T JUST ADMIT THAT YOU'RE A FAITHFUL FOLLOWER OF THE *EASTERN ORTHODOX CHURCH OF TARIM* AND THEIR BELIEF THAT YOU SHOULD BE A VIRGIN UNTIL YOU'RE *MARRIED*...
I MEAN, EVEN IF YOU *GOT* A DIVORCE, YOU'D STILL WANT TO *YOU-KNOW-WHAT*-- BUT IF YOU DID IT *OUTSIDE* OF MARRIAGE, YOU'D BE BREAKING THE CHURCH *LAWS*, RIGHT....?
SO WHY NOT JUST MAKE THE *BEST OF IT*? AT LEAST THIS WAY YOU'RE NOT BREAKING ANY CHURCH LAWS. YOU HAVE ALL THE MONEY AND *BOOZE* YOU WANT AND I HAVE A HUSBAND AND A PLACE TO LIVE AND PEOPLE TO TAKE CARE OF MY *MOTHER*...


I MEAN, I COULD *UNDERSTAND* YOU BEING UPSET IF IT WAS COSTING YOU ANYTHING TO KEEP ME AND MY MOTHER, BUT IT ALL COMES OUT OF TAXES *ANYWAY*, RIGHT?
I'M NOT *ASKING* YOU FOR *ANYTHING*--YOU CAN DO WHATEVER YOU *WANT* TO DO...
WHICH, JUDGING BY THE LAST FEW WEEKS, INVOLVES EATING FOOD THAT'S *BAD* FOR YOU, *DRINKING* WAY TOO MUCH, YELLING AT *ANYONE* WHO GETS IN YOUR WAY, GETTING FRIENDLY WITH ME JUST BEFORE BEDTIME, YAWNING, SAYING *"TARIM CEREBUS IS TIRED"* TURNING OVER AND FALLING *ASLEEP*...
ANYWAY, WHETHER YOU WANT US TO STAY HERE TOGETHER OR WHETHER YOU WANT US TO LEAVE AND SPLIT UP, IT'S UP TO YOU... I MEAN I CAN TALK UNTIL I'M BLUE IN THE FACE, BUT YOU'RE STILL GOING TO DO WHAT YOU WANT, SO, REALLY WHY SHOULD I *BOTHER*? BESIDES I REALLY NEED SOME *SLEEP*.
KISS

end

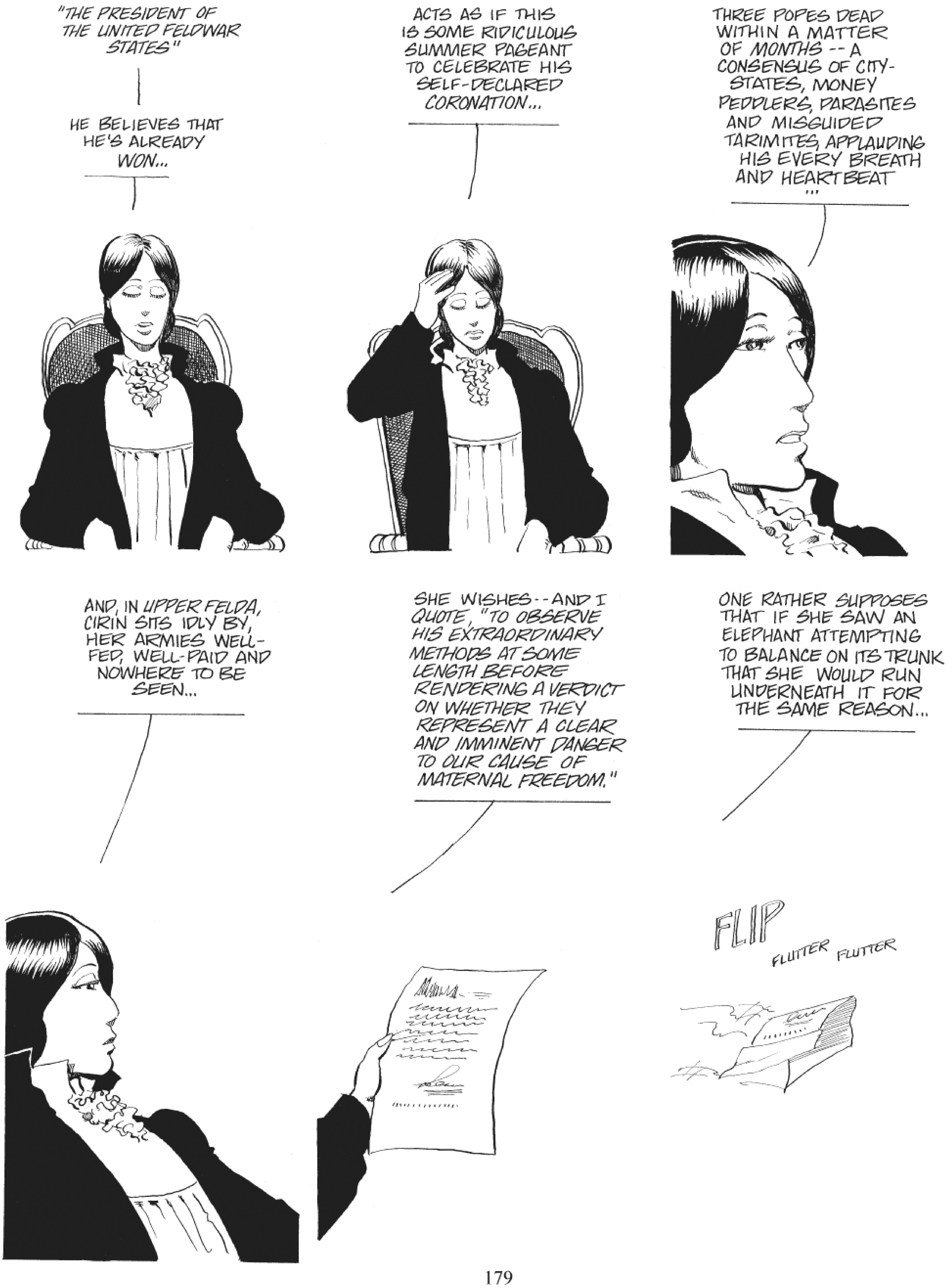

HENROT-GUTCH
SHE'S A GOOD GIRL, MR. BLAKELY ...
A LOVELY SWEET CHILD.

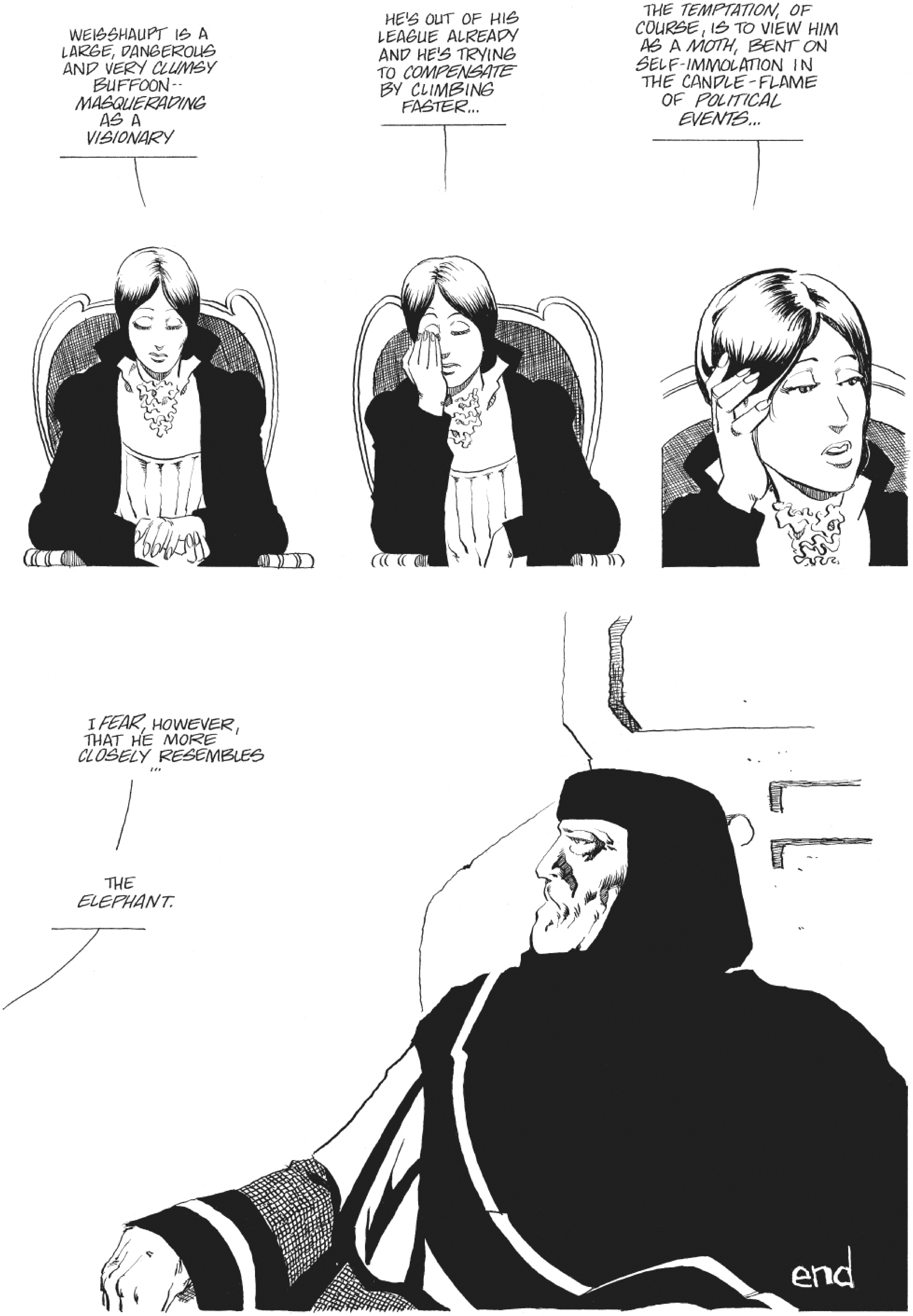

SHE WAS ALWAYS QUITE SECRETIVE, HOWEVER
HEY! HEY, YOU! BRAT...!
GIT OUTTA THAT PEAR TREE NOW!
THAT'S NOT A TOY!
I HEARD THAT! I HEARD THAT!
SMART MONKEY EH? THINK YER A SMART MONKEY!
WHERE'S ME BRICK?
BLANKETY-BLANK... NO GOOD...
WHERE'S ME DAMN...
AHA!
CHEW ON THIS, SMART BOY!
POW!
HAHAAHA HAHAHAA

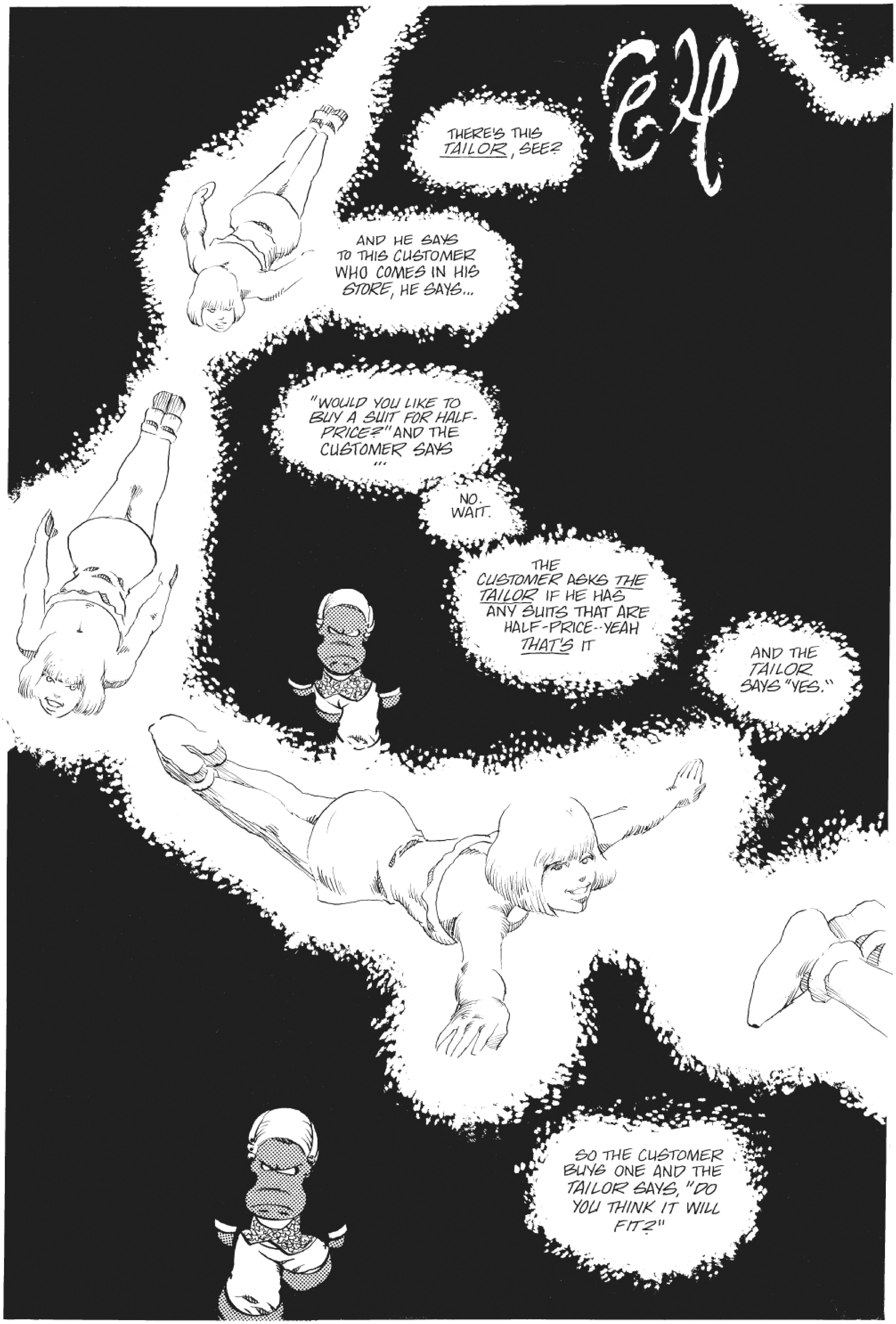

I HOPE IT'S BROKEN Y'LITTLE SWINE!
AHEM
AS I WAS SAYING MR. BLAKELY, SOPHIA WAS *SECRETIVE* EVEN AS A CHILD...
SHE *NEVER* BROUGHT HER LITTLE PLAYMATES *HOME* TO *MEET* ME...

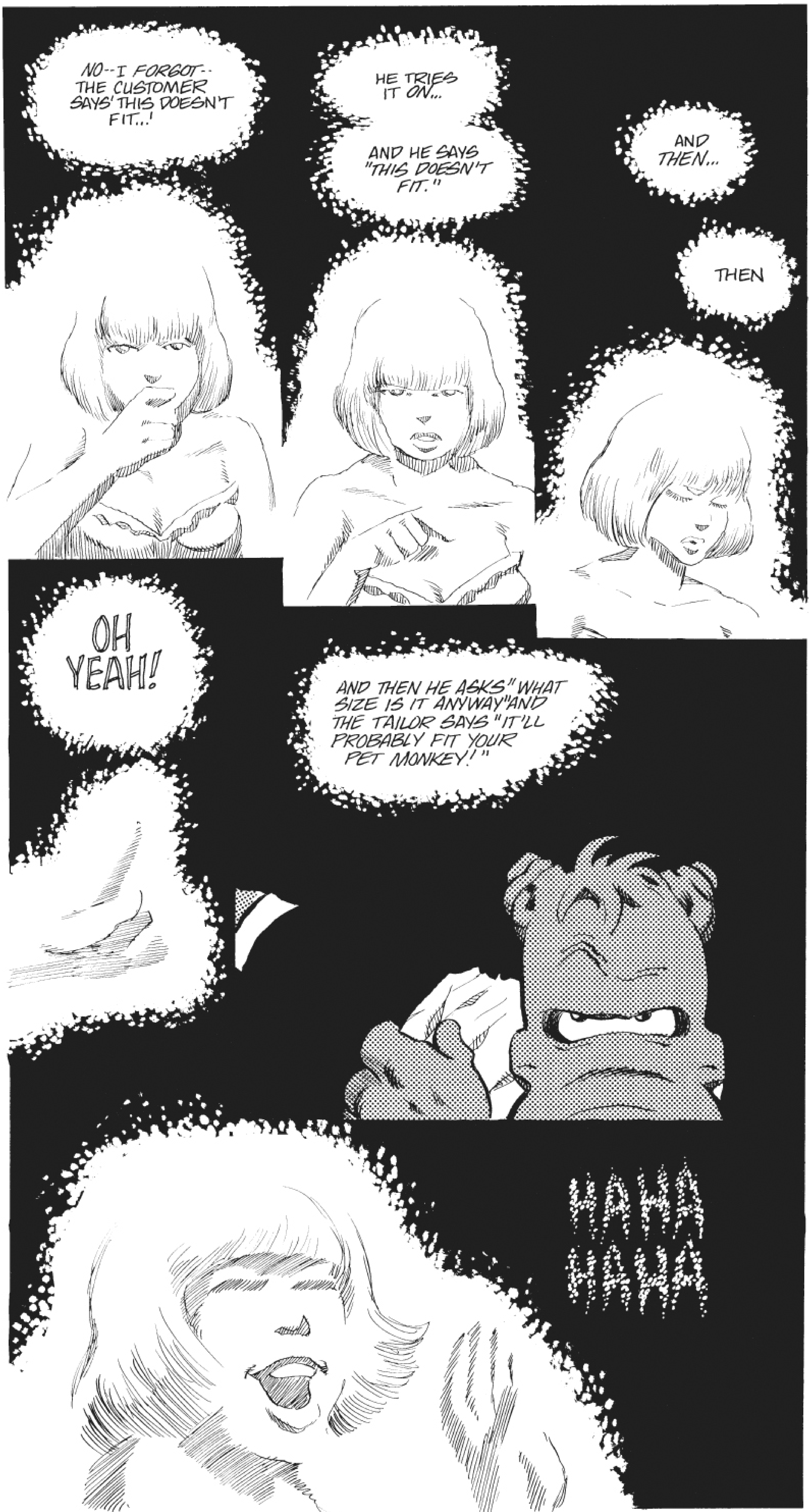
end

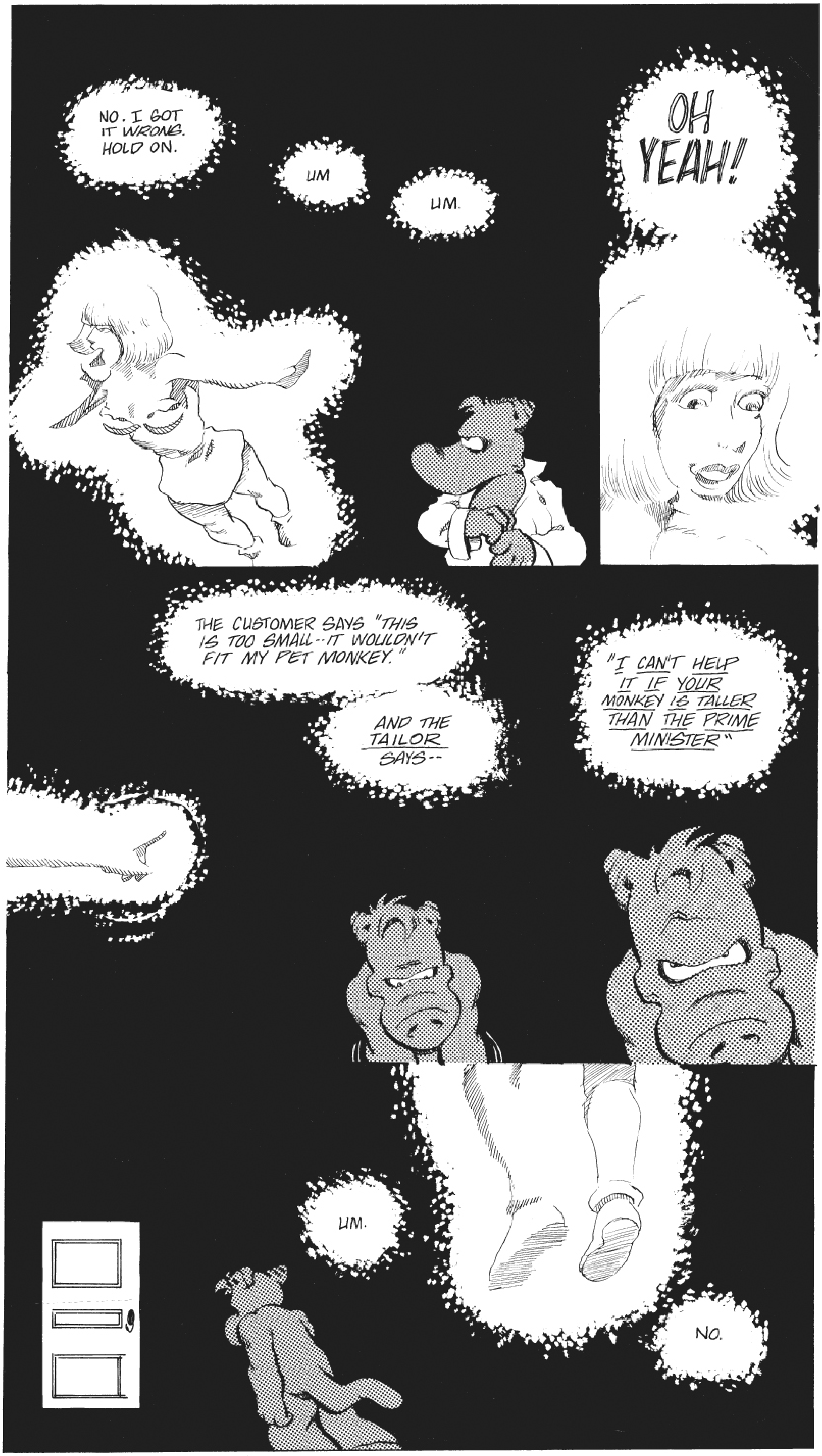
ASTORIA

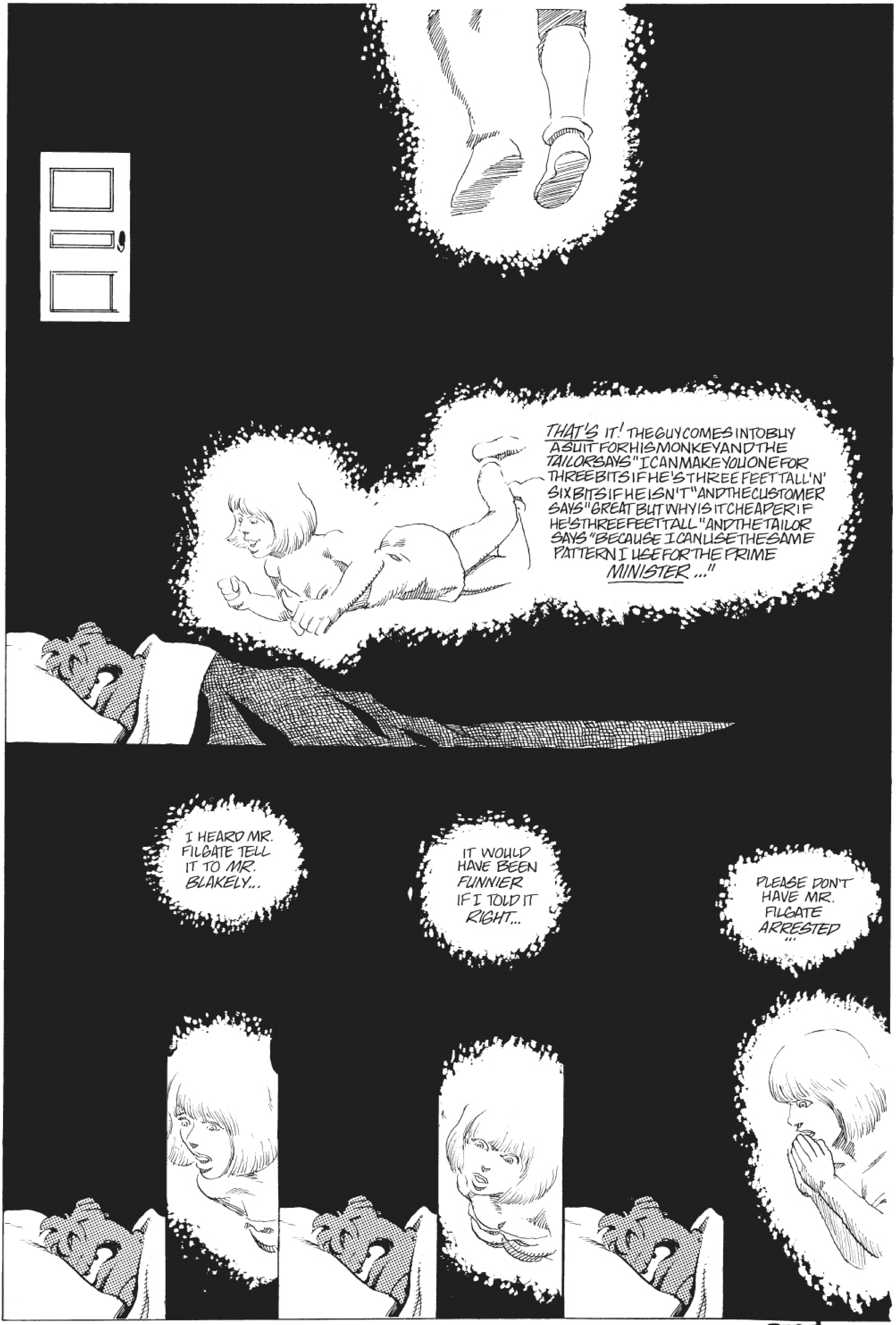

"THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED FELDWAR STATES"
HE BELIEVES THAT HE'S ALREADY WON...
ACTS AS IF THIS IS SOME RIDICULOUS SUMMER PAGEANT TO CELEBRATE HIS SELF-DECLARED CORONATION...
THREE POPES DEAD WITHIN A MATTER OF MONTHS -- A CONSENSUS OF CITY-STATES, MONEY PEDDLERS, PARASITES AND MISGUIDED TARIMITES, APPLAUDING HIS EVERY BREATH AND HEARTBEAT ...
AND, IN UPPER FELDA, CIRIN SITS IDLY BY, HER ARMIES WELL-FED, WELL-PAID AND NOWHERE TO BE SEEN...
SHE WISHES--AND I QUOTE, "TO OBSERVE HIS EXTRAORDINARY METHODS AT SOME LENGTH BEFORE RENDERING A VERDICT ON WHETHER THEY REPRESENT A CLEAR AND IMMINENT DANGER TO OUR CAUSE OF MATERNAL FREEDOM."
ONE RATHER SUPPOSES THAT IF SHE SAW AN ELEPHANT ATTEMPTING TO BALANCE ON ITS TRUNK THAT SHE WOULD RUN UNDERNEATH IT FOR THE SAME REASON...
FLIP
FLUTTER FLUTTER


WEISSHAUPT IS A LARGE, DANGEROUS AND VERY *CLUMSY* BUFFOON-- *MASQUERADING* AS A *VISIONARY*
HE'S OUT OF HIS LEAGUE ALREADY AND HE'S TRYING TO *COMPENSATE* BY CLIMBING FASTER...
THE *TEMPTATION,* OF COURSE, IS TO VIEW HIM AS A *MOTH,* BENT ON SELF-IMMOLATION IN THE CANDLE-FLAME OF *POLITICAL EVENTS*...
I *FEAR,* HOWEVER, THAT HE MORE *CLOSELY* RESEMBLES ...
THE *ELEPHANT.*
end

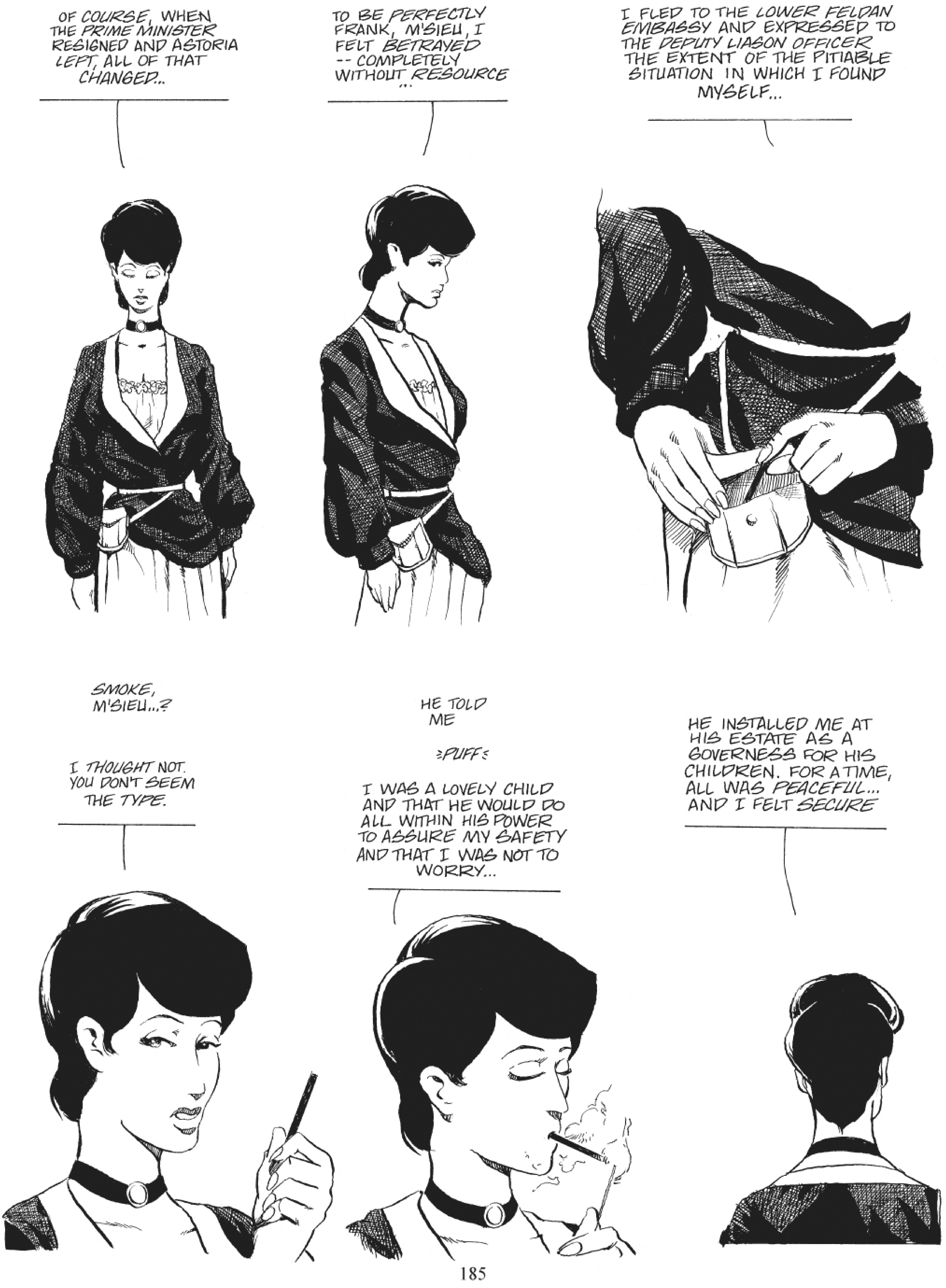

THERE'S THIS TAILOR, SEE?
AND HE SAYS TO THIS CUSTOMER WHO COMES IN HIS STORE, HE SAYS...
"WOULD YOU LIKE TO BUY A SUIT FOR HALF-PRICE?" AND THE CUSTOMER SAYS ...
NO. WAIT.
THE CUSTOMER ASKS THE TAILOR IF HE HAS ANY SUITS THAT ARE HALF-PRICE--YEAH THAT'S IT
AND THE TAILOR SAYS "YES."
SO THE CUSTOMER BUYS ONE AND THE TAILOR SAYS, "DO YOU THINK IT WILL FIT?"

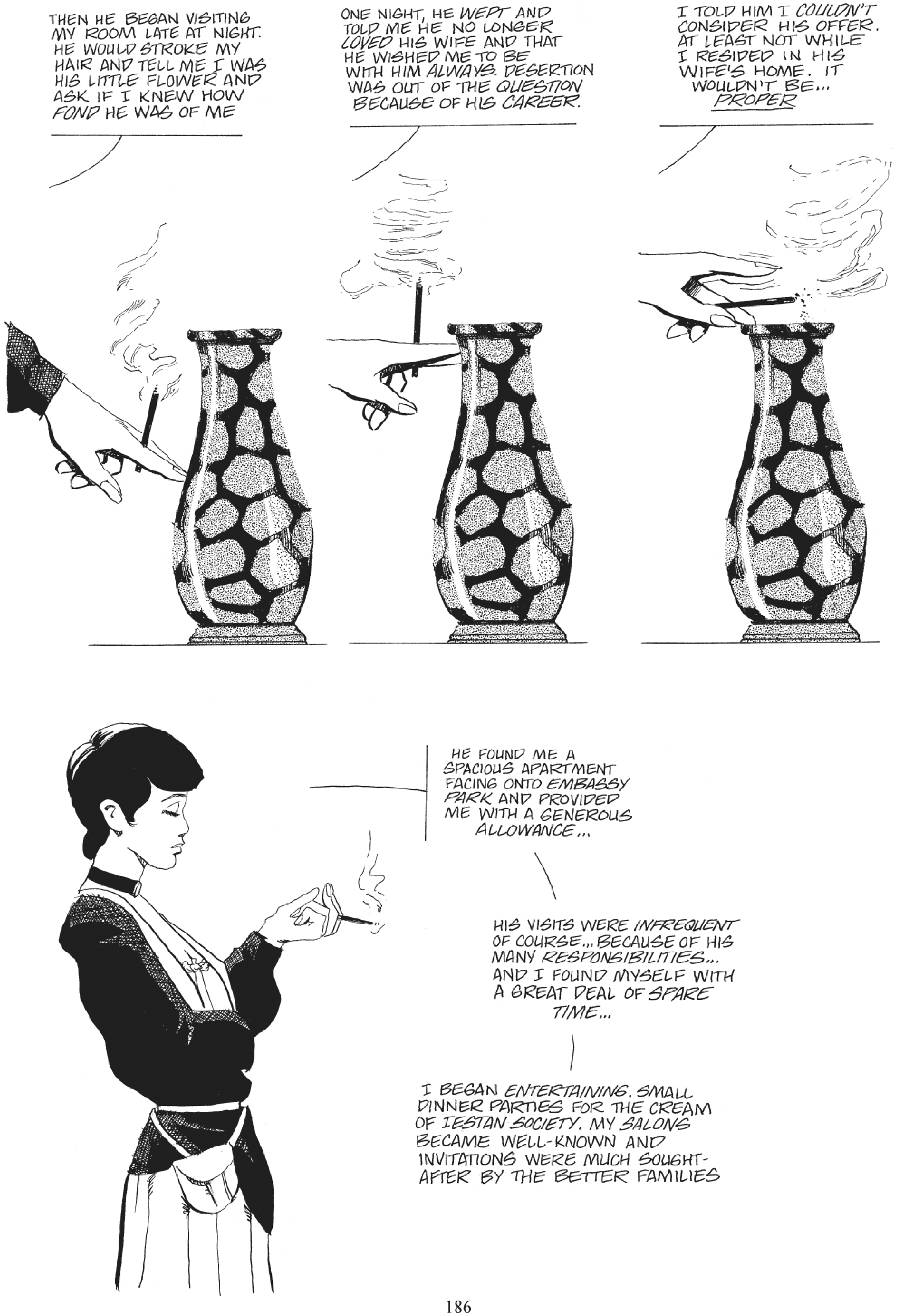

NO--I FORGOT--THE CUSTOMER SAYS' THIS DOESN'T FIT...'
HE TRIES IT ON...
AND HE SAYS "THIS DOESN'T FIT."
AND THEN...
THEN
OH YEAH!
AND THEN HE ASKS "WHAT SIZE IS IT ANYWAY" AND THE TAILOR SAYS "IT'LL PROBABLY FIT YOUR PET MONKEY!"
HAHA HAHA

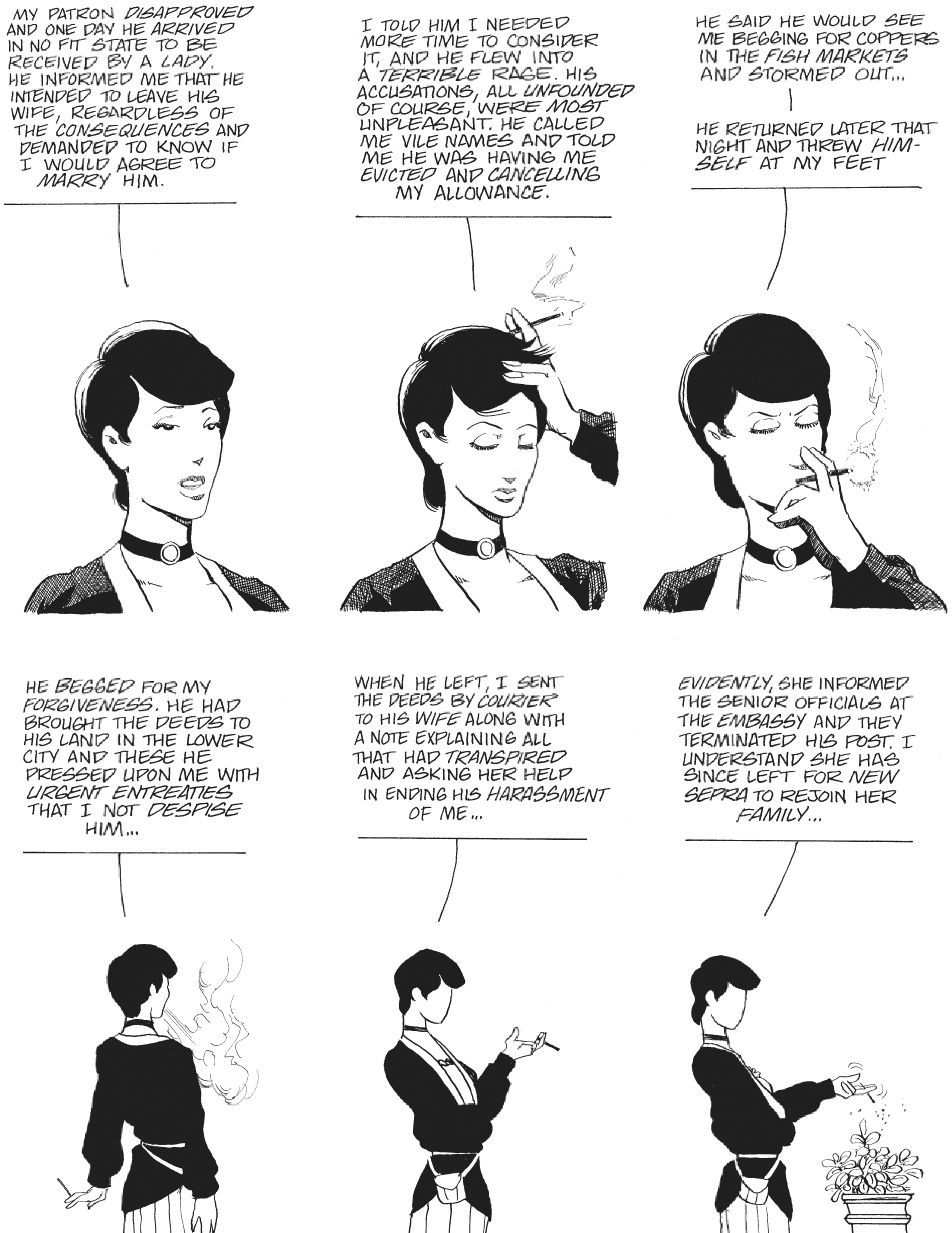

NO. I GOT IT WRONG. HOLD ON.
UM
UM.
OH YEAH!
THE CUSTOMER SAYS "THIS IS TOO SMALL--IT WOULDN'T FIT MY PET MONKEY."
AND THE TAILOR SAYS--
"I CAN'T HELP IT IF YOUR MONKEY IS TALLER THAN THE PRIME MINISTER"
UM.
NO.

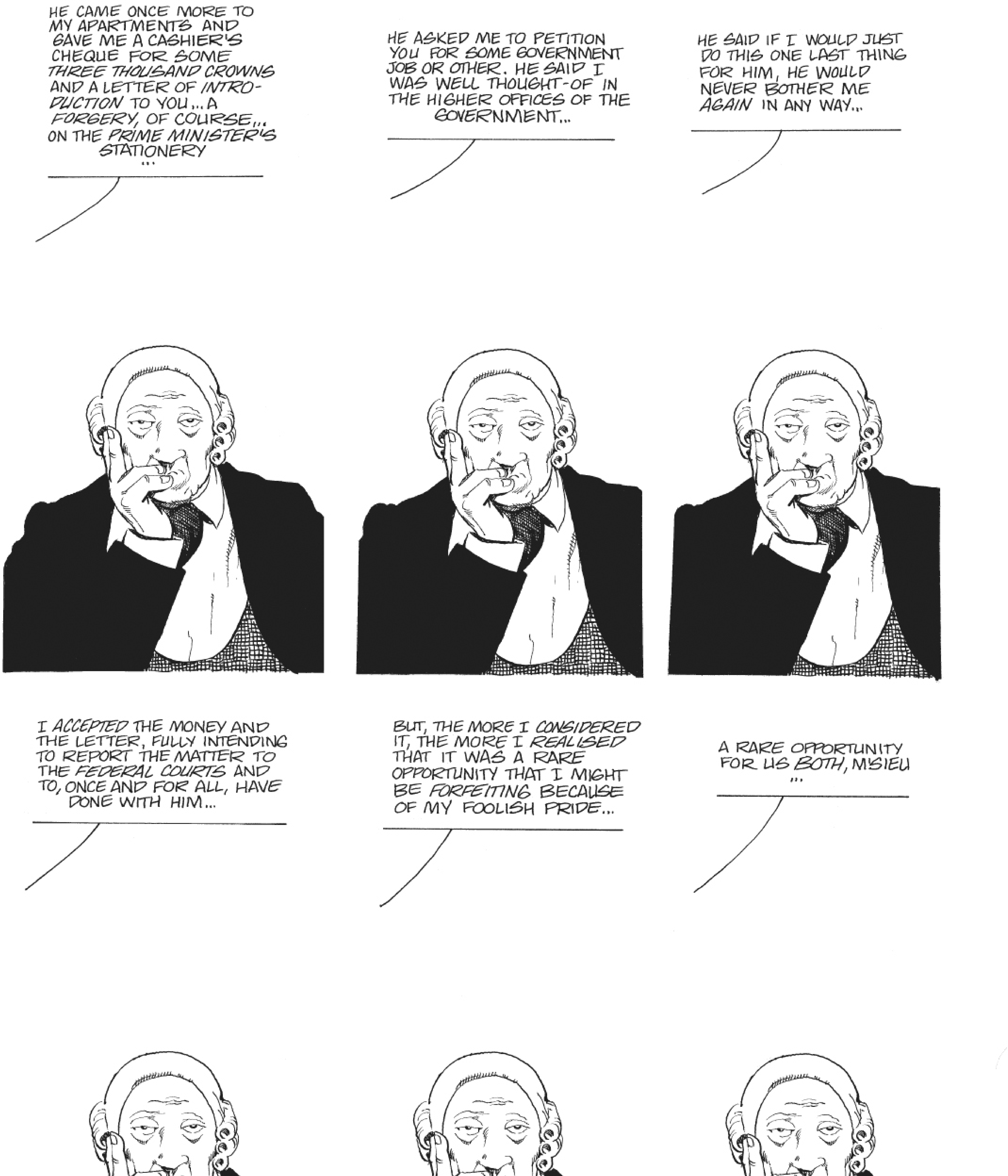

THAT'S IT! THEGUYCOMESINTOBUY ASUITFORHISMONKEYANDTHE TAILORSAYS"ICANMAKEYOUONEFOR THREEBITSIFHE'STHREEFEETTALL'N' SIXBITSIFHEISN'T"ANDTHECUSTOMER SAYS"GREATBUTWHYISITCHEAPERIF HE'STHREEFEETTALL"ANDTHETAILOR SAYS"BECAUSE ICANUSETHESAME PATTERN I USE FOR THE PRIME MINISTER ..."
I HEARD MR. FILGATE TELL IT TO MR. BLAKELY...
IT WOULD HAVE BEEN FUNNIER IF I TOLD IT RIGHT...
PLEASE DON'T HAVE MR. FILGATE ARRESTED ...

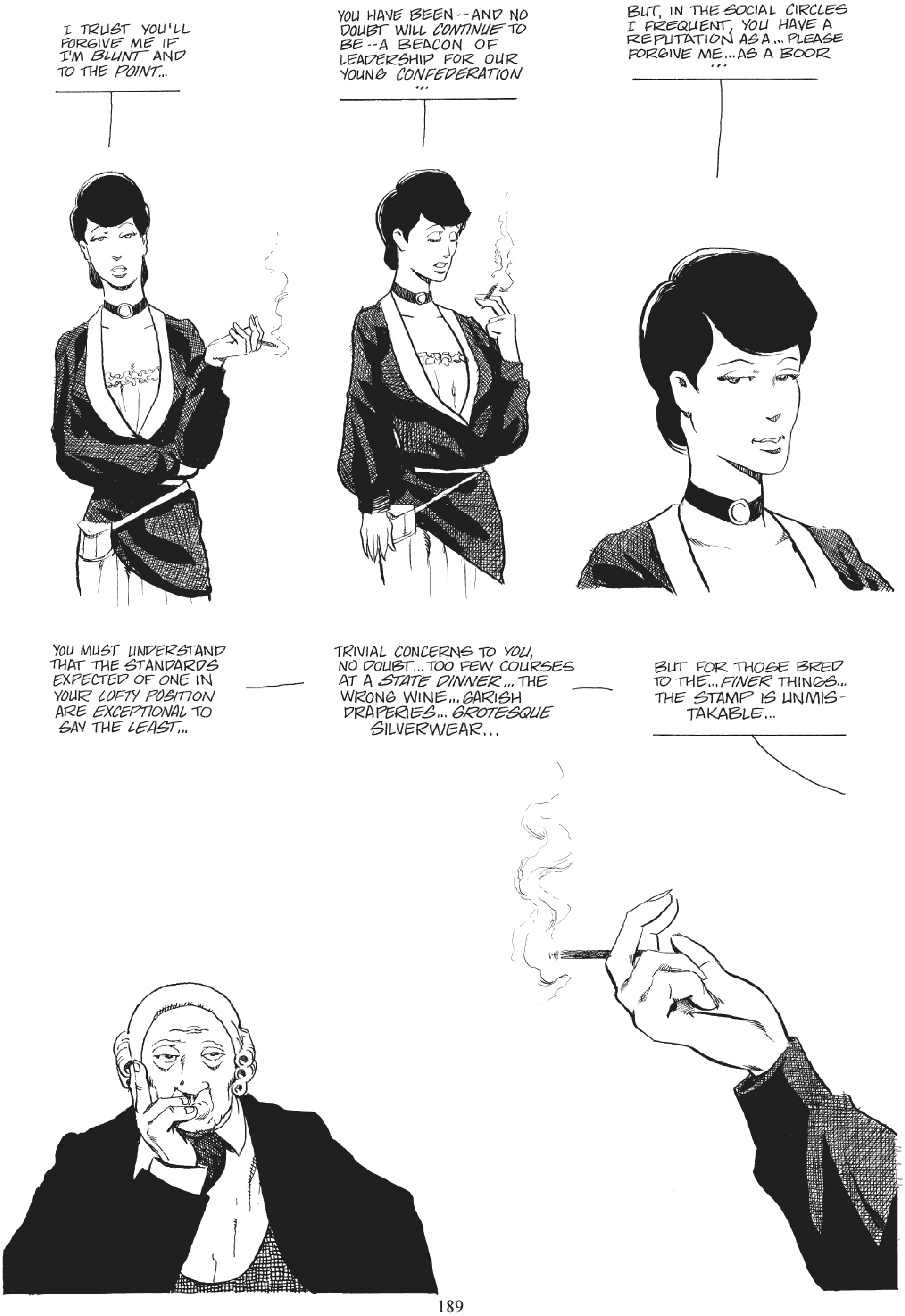
end

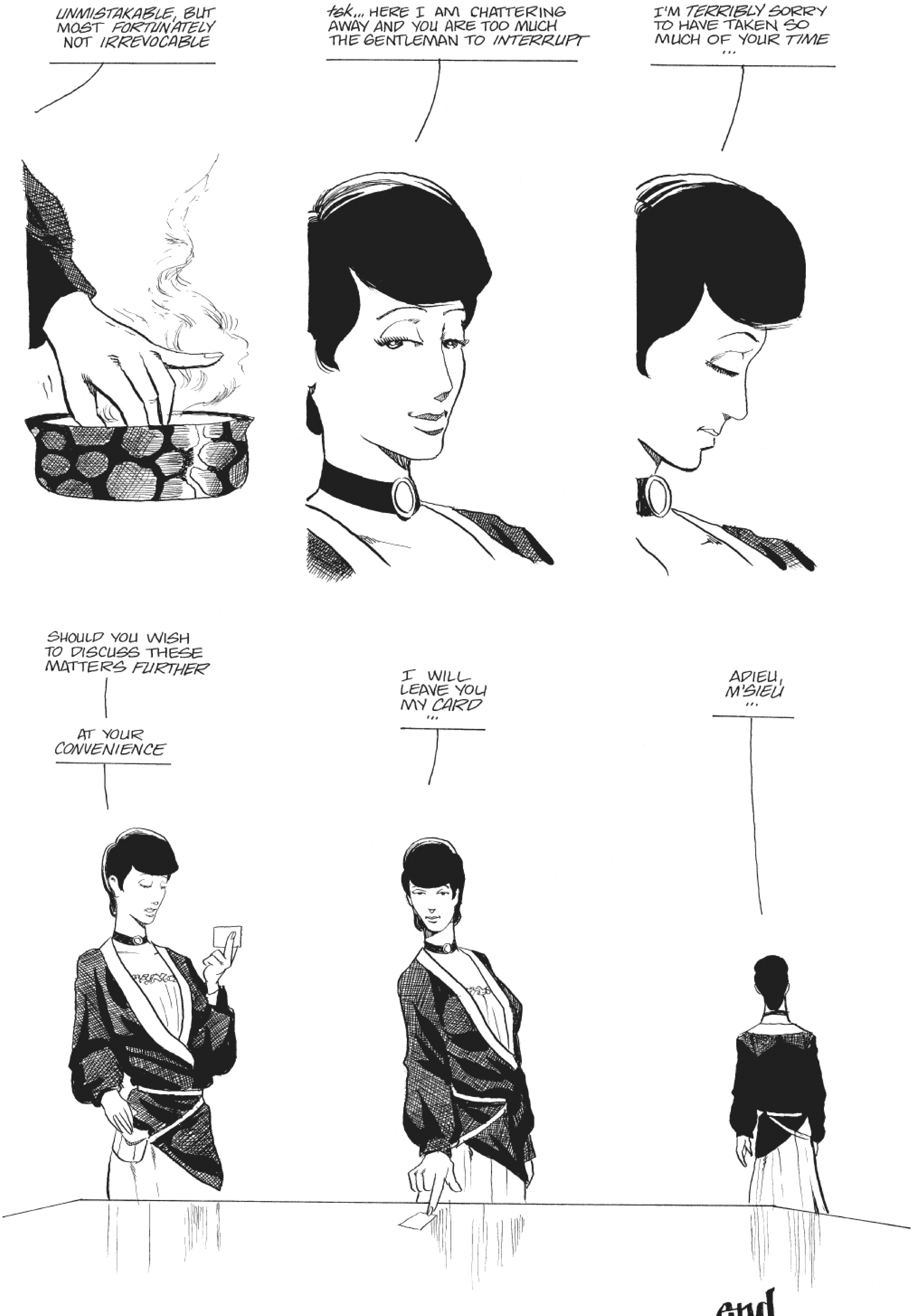

OF COURSE, WHEN THE PRIME MINISTER RESIGNED AND ASTORIA LEFT, ALL OF THAT CHANGED...
TO BE PERFECTLY FRANK, M'SIEU, I FELT BETRAYED -- COMPLETELY WITHOUT RESOURCE ...
I FLED TO THE LOWER FELDAN EMBASSY AND EXPRESSED TO THE DEPUTY LIASON OFFICER THE EXTENT OF THE PITIABLE SITUATION IN WHICH I FOUND MYSELF...
SMOKE, M'SIEU...?
I THOUGHT NOT. YOU DON'T SEEM THE TYPE.
HE TOLD ME
PUFF
I WAS A LOVELY CHILD AND THAT HE WOULD DO ALL WITHIN HIS POWER TO ASSURE MY SAFETY AND THAT I WAS NOT TO WORRY...
HE INSTALLED ME AT HIS ESTATE AS A GOVERNESS FOR HIS CHILDREN. FOR A TIME, ALL WAS PEACEFUL... AND I FELT SECURE


THEN HE BEGAN VISITING MY ROOM LATE AT NIGHT. HE WOULD STROKE MY HAIR AND TELL ME I WAS HIS LITTLE FLOWER AND ASK IF I KNEW HOW *FOND* HE WAS OF ME
ONE NIGHT, HE *WEPT* AND TOLD ME HE NO LONGER *LOVED* HIS WIFE AND THAT HE WISHED ME TO BE WITH HIM *ALWAYS*. DESERTION WAS OUT OF THE *QUESTION* BECAUSE OF HIS *CAREER*.
I TOLD HIM I *COULDN'T* CONSIDER HIS OFFER. AT LEAST NOT WHILE I RESIDED IN HIS WIFE'S HOME. IT WOULDN'T BE... *PROPER*
HE FOUND ME A SPACIOUS APARTMENT FACING ONTO *EMBASSY PARK* AND PROVIDED ME WITH A GENEROUS *ALLOWANCE*...
HIS VISITS WERE *INFREQUENT* OF COURSE... BECAUSE OF HIS MANY *RESPONSIBILITIES*... AND I FOUND MYSELF WITH A GREAT DEAL OF *SPARE TIME*...
I BEGAN *ENTERTAINING*. SMALL *DINNER PARTIES* FOR THE CREAM OF *IESTAN SOCIETY*. MY *SALONS* BECAME WELL-KNOWN AND INVITATIONS WERE MUCH SOUGHT-AFTER BY THE BETTER FAMILIES

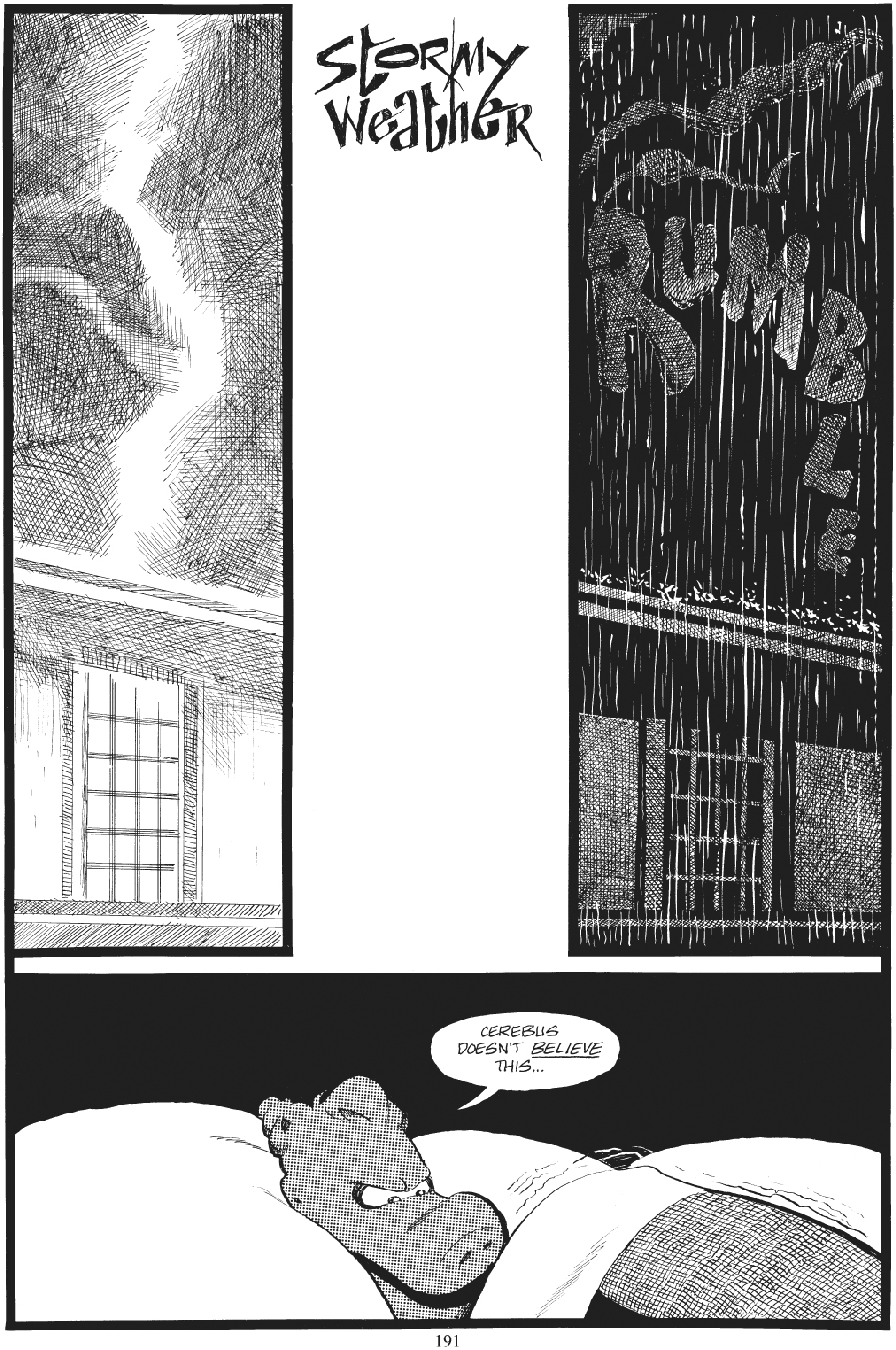

MY PATRON *DISAPPROVED* AND ONE DAY HE *ARRIVED* IN NO FIT *STATE* TO BE RECEIVED BY A *LADY*. HE INFORMED ME THAT HE INTENDED TO LEAVE HIS WIFE, REGARDLESS OF THE *CONSEQUENCES* AND DEMANDED TO KNOW IF I WOULD AGREE TO *MARRY* HIM.
I TOLD HIM I NEEDED MORE TIME TO CONSIDER IT, AND HE FLEW INTO A *TERRIBLE* RAGE. HIS ACCUSATIONS, ALL *UNFOUNDED* OF COURSE, WERE *MOST* UNPLEASANT. HE CALLED ME VILE NAMES AND TOLD ME HE WAS HAVING ME *EVICTED* AND *CANCELLING* MY ALLOWANCE.
HE SAID HE WOULD SEE ME BEGGING FOR COPPERS IN THE *FISH MARKETS* AND STORMED OUT...
HE RETURNED LATER THAT NIGHT AND THREW *HIMSELF* AT MY FEET
HE *BEGGED* FOR MY *FORGIVENESS*. HE HAD BROUGHT THE DEEDS TO HIS LAND IN THE LOWER CITY AND THESE HE PRESSED UPON ME WITH *URGENT ENTREATIES* THAT I NOT *DESPISE* HIM...
WHEN HE LEFT, I SENT THE DEEDS BY *COURIER* TO HIS *WIFE* ALONG WITH A NOTE EXPLAINING ALL THAT HAD *TRANSPIRED* AND ASKING HER HELP IN ENDING HIS *HARASSMENT* OF ME...
EVIDENTLY, SHE INFORMED THE SENIOR OFFICIALS AT THE *EMBASSY* AND THEY TERMINATED HIS POST. I UNDERSTAND SHE HAS SINCE LEFT FOR *NEW SEPRA* TO REJOIN HER *FAMILY*...

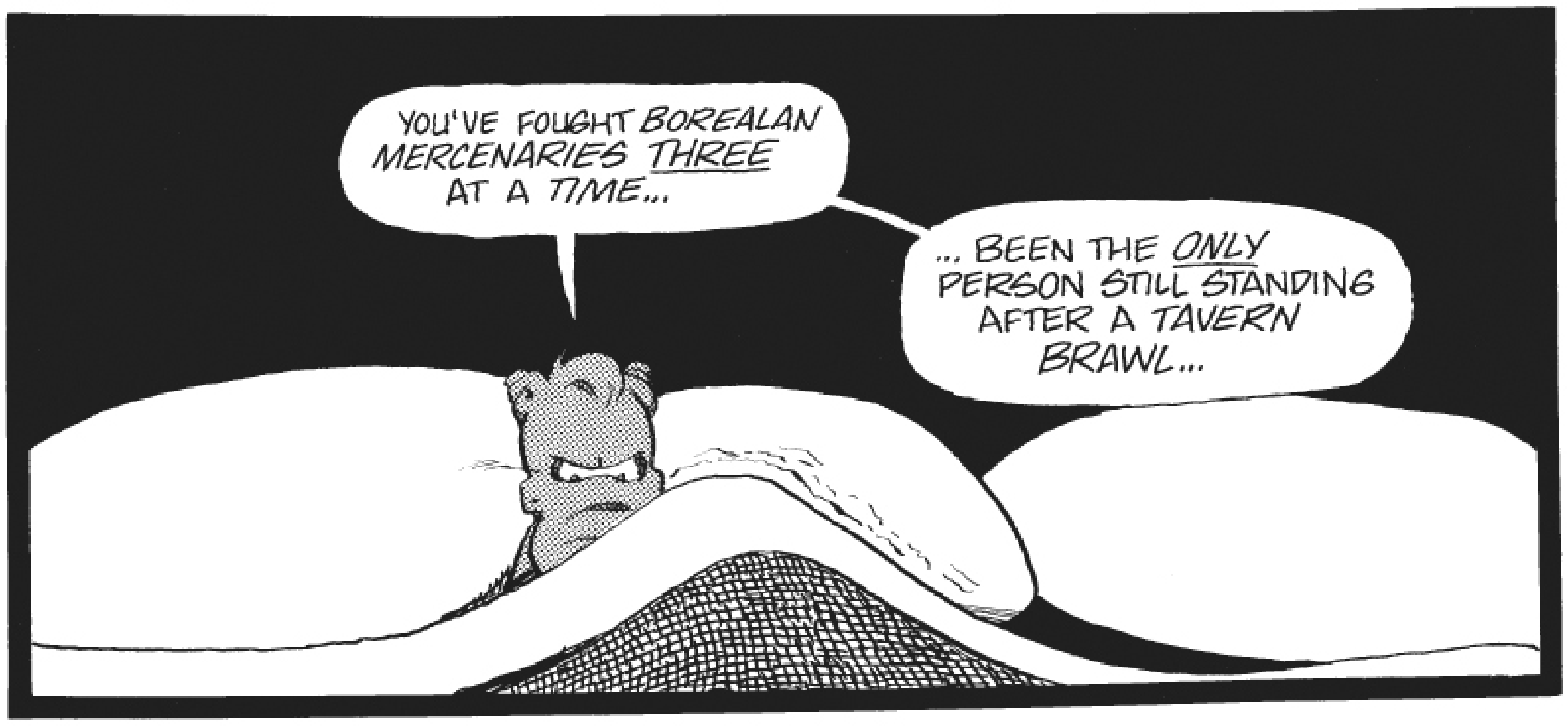

HE CAME ONCE MORE TO MY APARTMENTS AND GAVE ME A CASHIER'S CHEQUE FOR SOME THREE THOUSAND CROWNS AND A LETTER OF INTRODUCTION TO YOU... A FORGERY, OF COURSE... ON THE PRIME MINISTER'S STATIONERY ...
HE ASKED ME TO PETITION YOU FOR SOME GOVERNMENT JOB OR OTHER. HE SAID I WAS WELL THOUGHT-OF IN THE HIGHER OFFICES OF THE GOVERNMENT...
HE SAID IF I WOULD JUST DO THIS ONE LAST THING FOR HIM, HE WOULD NEVER BOTHER ME AGAIN IN ANY WAY...
I ACCEPTED THE MONEY AND THE LETTER, FULLY INTENDING TO REPORT THE MATTER TO THE FEDERAL COURTS AND TO, ONCE AND FOR ALL, HAVE DONE WITH HIM...
BUT, THE MORE I CONSIDERED IT, THE MORE I REALISED THAT IT WAS A RARE OPPORTUNITY THAT I MIGHT BE FORFEITING BECAUSE OF MY FOOLISH PRIDE...
A RARE OPPORTUNITY FOR US BOTH, M'SIEU ...

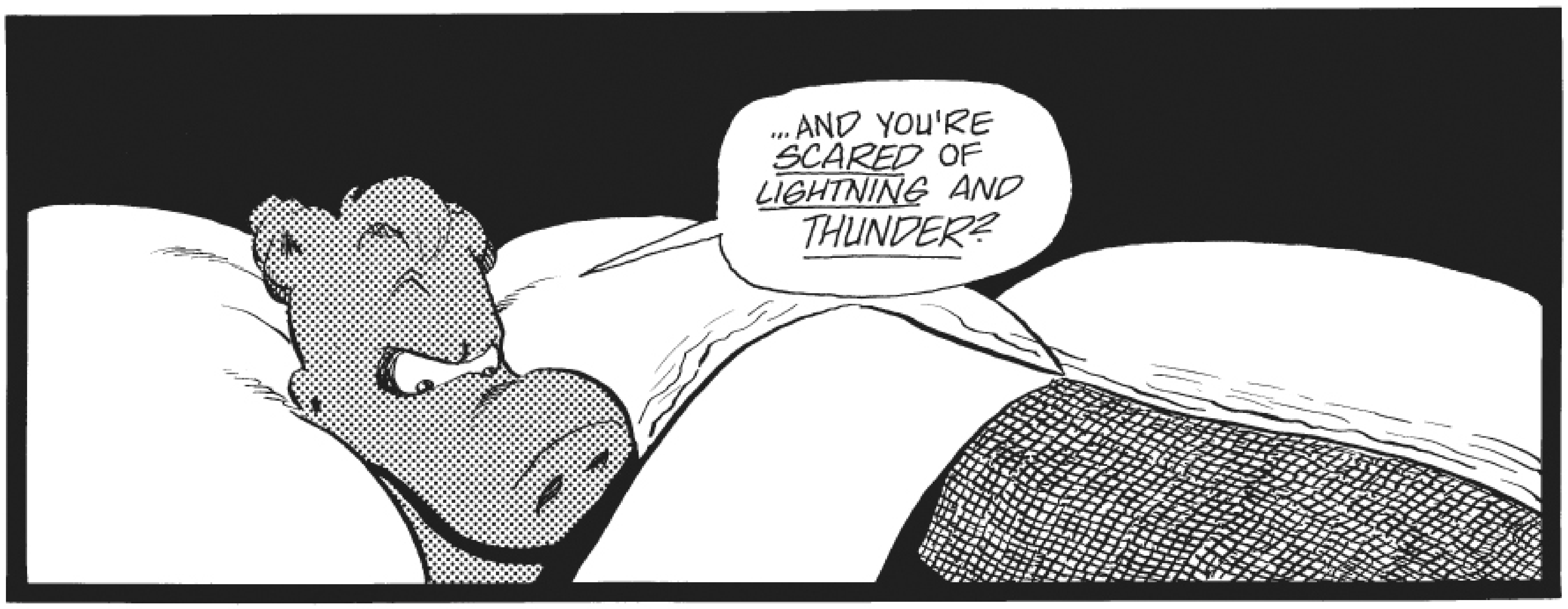

I TRUST YOU'LL FORGIVE ME IF I'M *BLUNT* AND TO THE *POINT*...
YOU HAVE BEEN--AND NO DOUBT WILL *CONTINUE* TO BE--A BEACON OF LEADERSHIP FOR OUR YOUNG *CONFEDERATION* ...
BUT, IN THE SOCIAL CIRCLES I FREQUENT, YOU HAVE A REPUTATION AS A... PLEASE FORGIVE ME...AS A BOOR ...
YOU MUST UNDERSTAND THAT THE STANDARDS EXPECTED OF ONE IN YOUR *LOFTY POSITION* ARE *EXCEPTIONAL* TO SAY THE *LEAST*...
TRIVIAL CONCERNS TO *YOU*, NO DOUBT...TOO FEW COURSES AT A *STATE DINNER*... THE WRONG WINE... GARISH DRAPERIES... *GROTESQUE* SILVERWEAR...
BUT FOR THOSE BRED TO THE...*FINER* THINGS... THE STAMP IS UNMISTAKABLE...

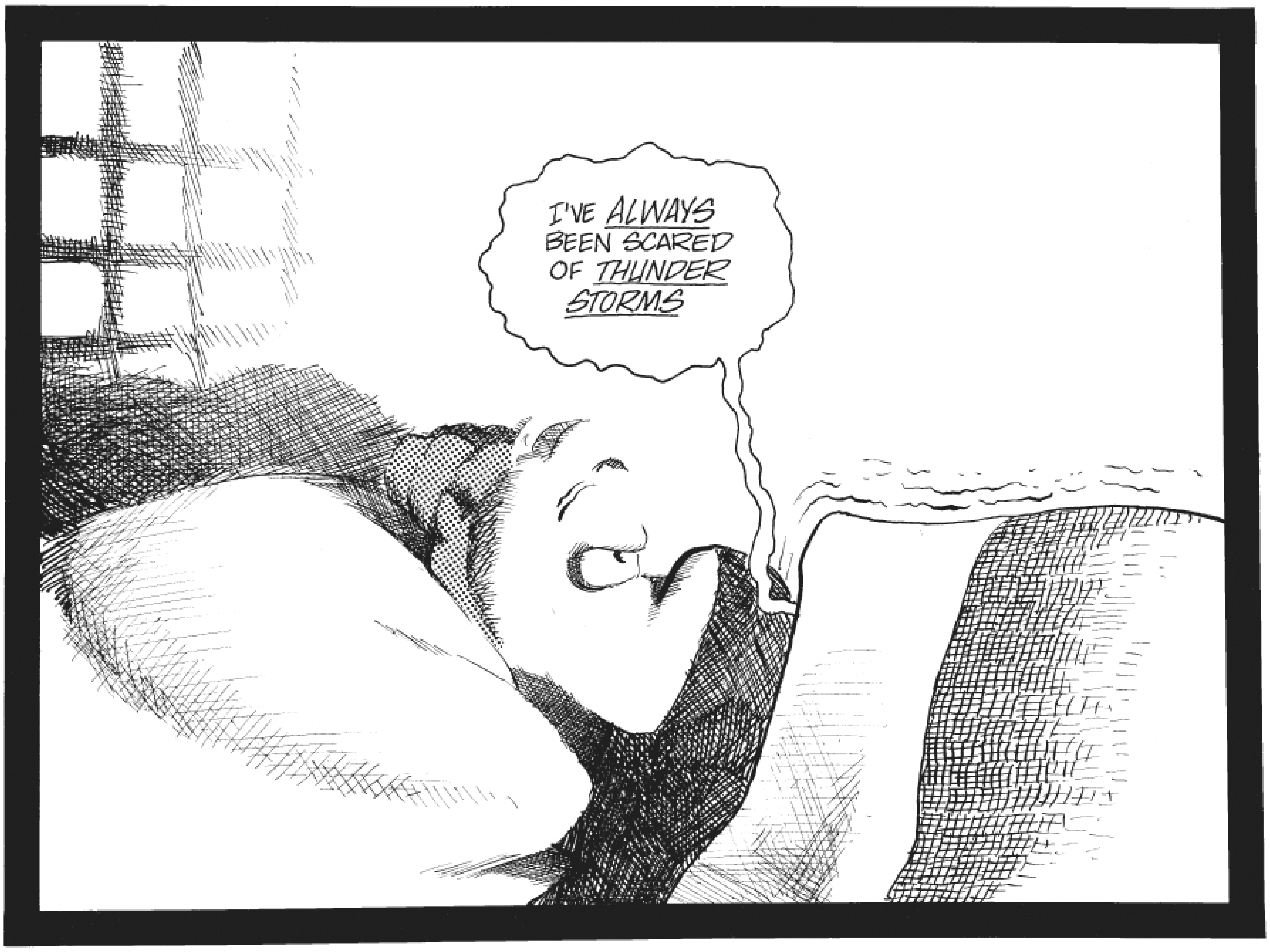

UNMISTAKABLE, BUT MOST *FORTUNATELY* NOT *IRREVOCABLE*
tsk,.. HERE I AM CHATTERING AWAY AND YOU ARE TOO MUCH THE GENTLEMAN TO *INTERRUPT*
I'M *TERRIBLY* SORRY TO HAVE TAKEN SO MUCH OF YOUR *TIME* ...
SHOULD YOU WISH TO DISCUSS THESE MATTERS *FURTHER*
AT YOUR CONVENIENCE
I WILL LEAVE YOU MY *CARD* ...
ADIEU, M'SIEU ...
end

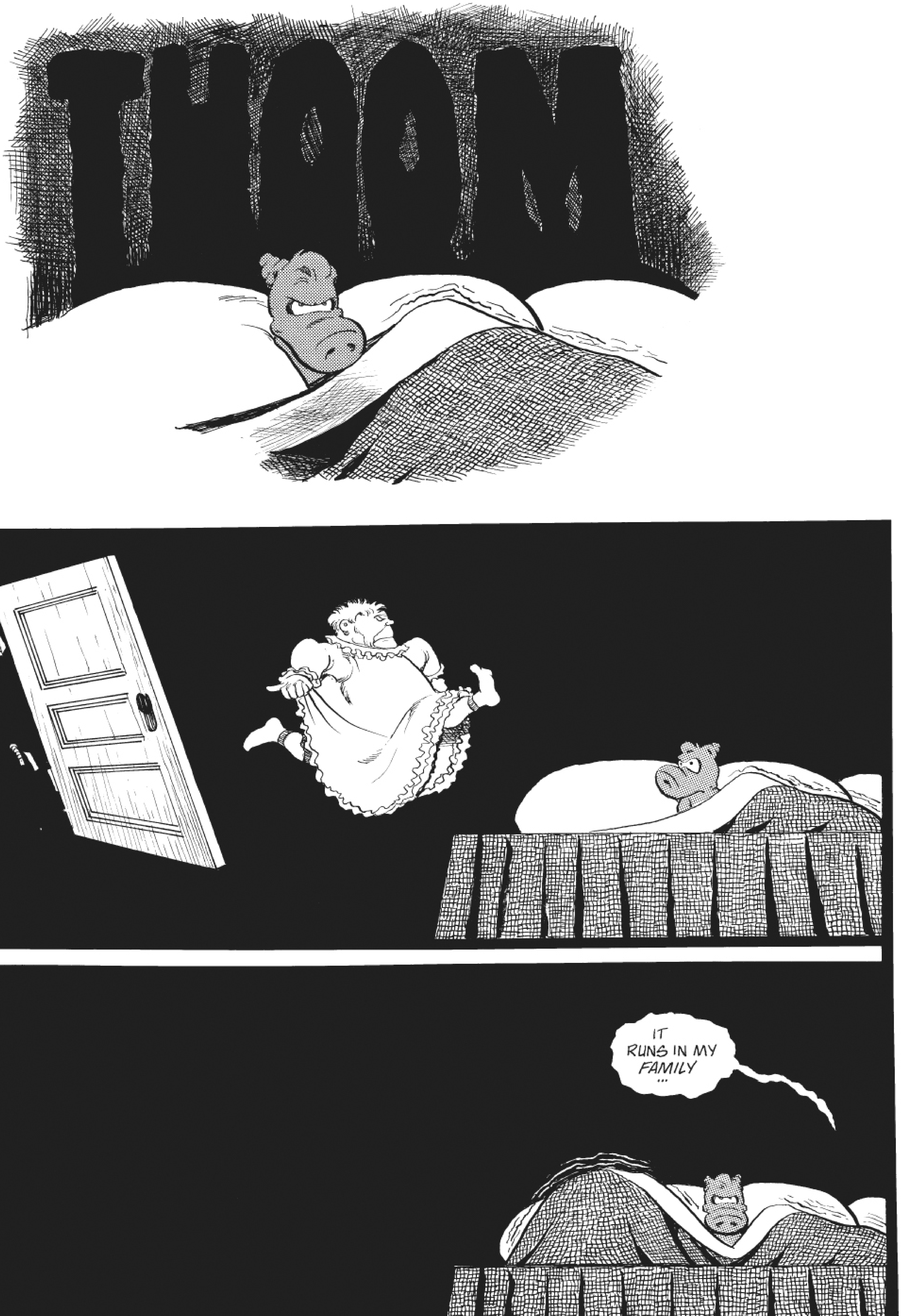
Stormy Weather


RUMBLE
CEREBUS DOESN'T BELIEVE THIS...


YOU'VE FOUGHT BOREALAN MERCENARIES THREE AT A TIME...
... BEEN THE ONLY PERSON STILL STANDING AFTER A TAVERN BRAWL...

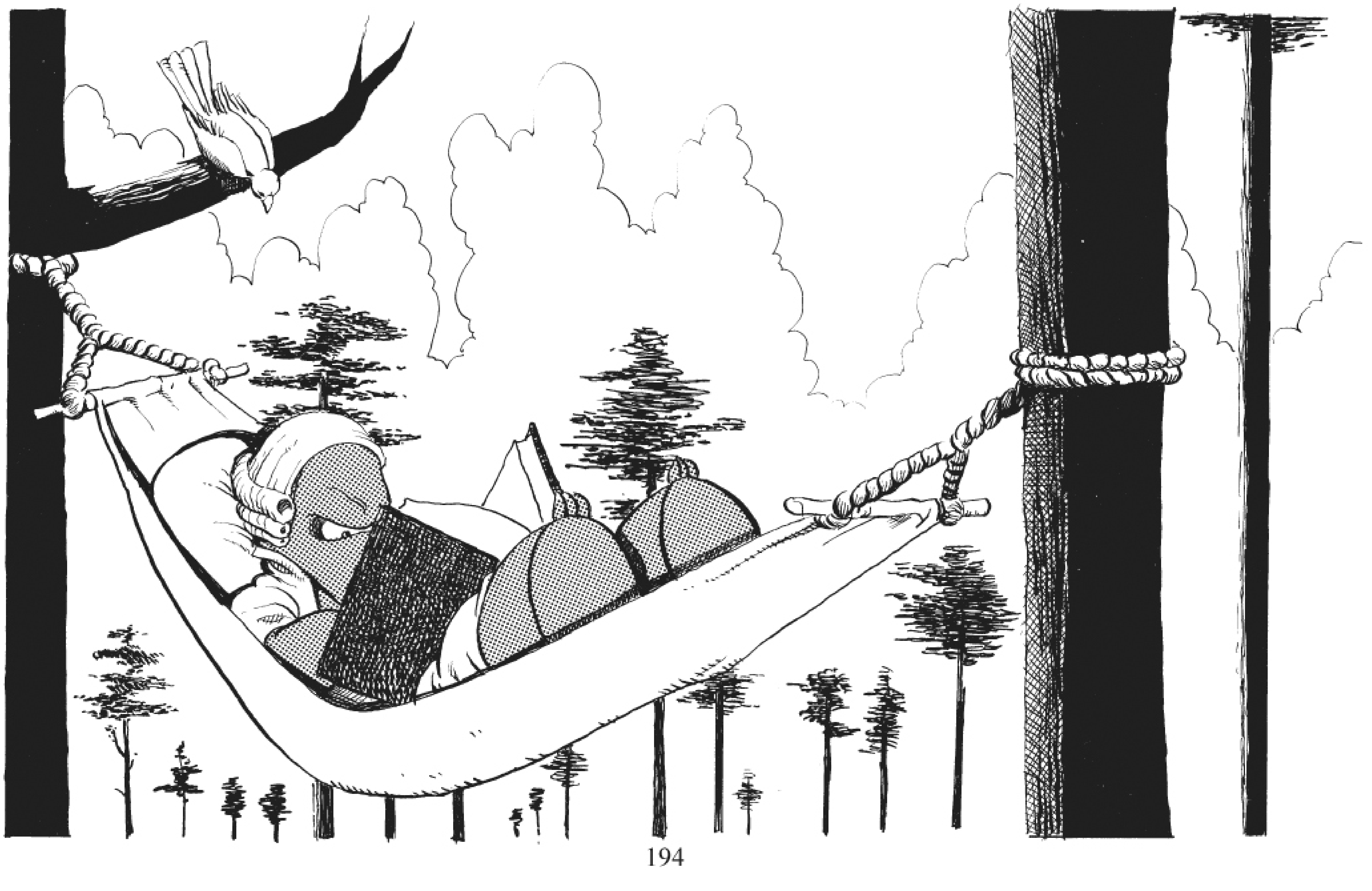

...AND YOU'RE SCARED OF LIGHTNING AND THUNDER?

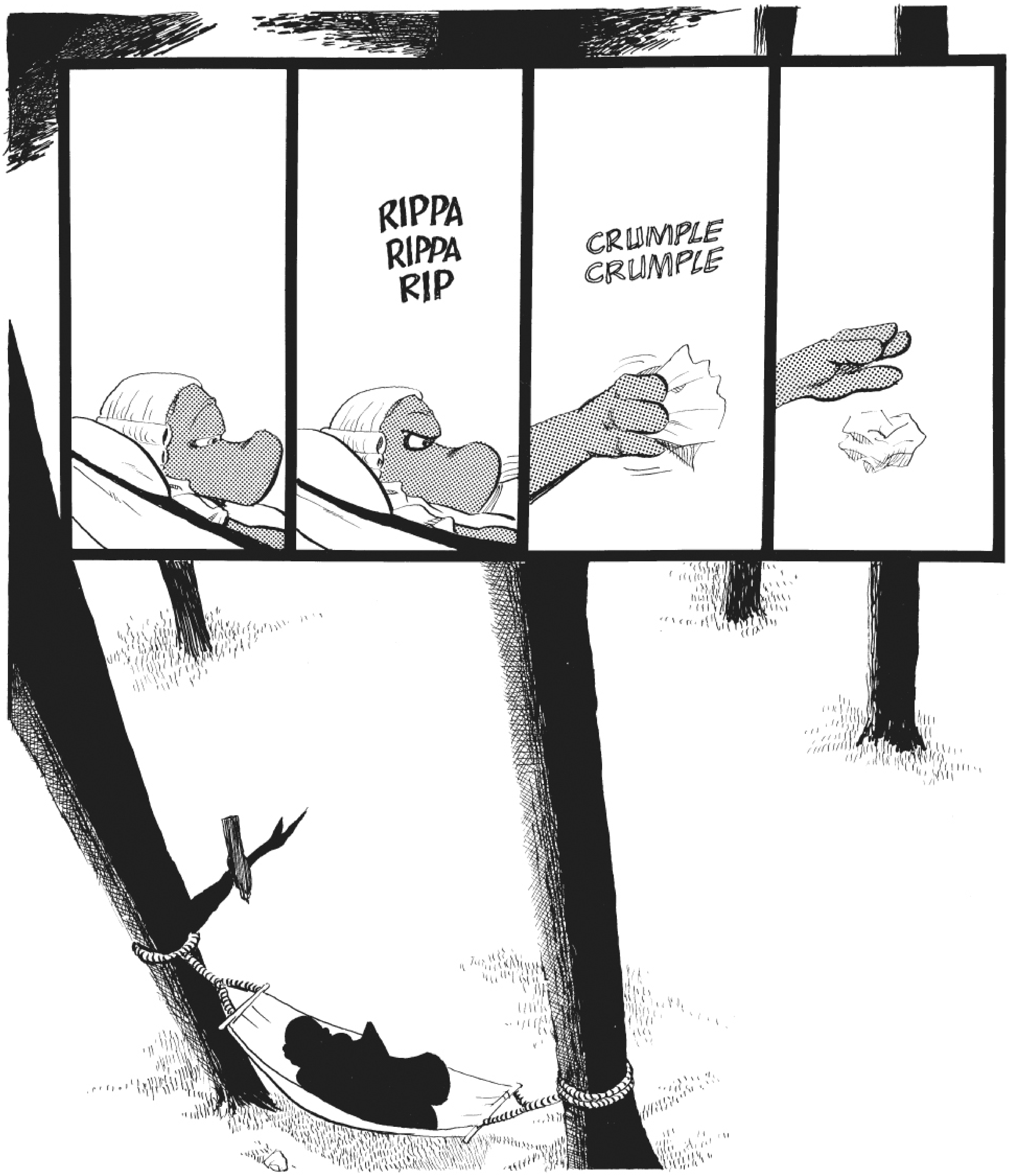

I'VE ALWAYS BEEN SCARED OF THUNDER STORMS


THOOM
IT RUNS IN MY *FAMILY* ...

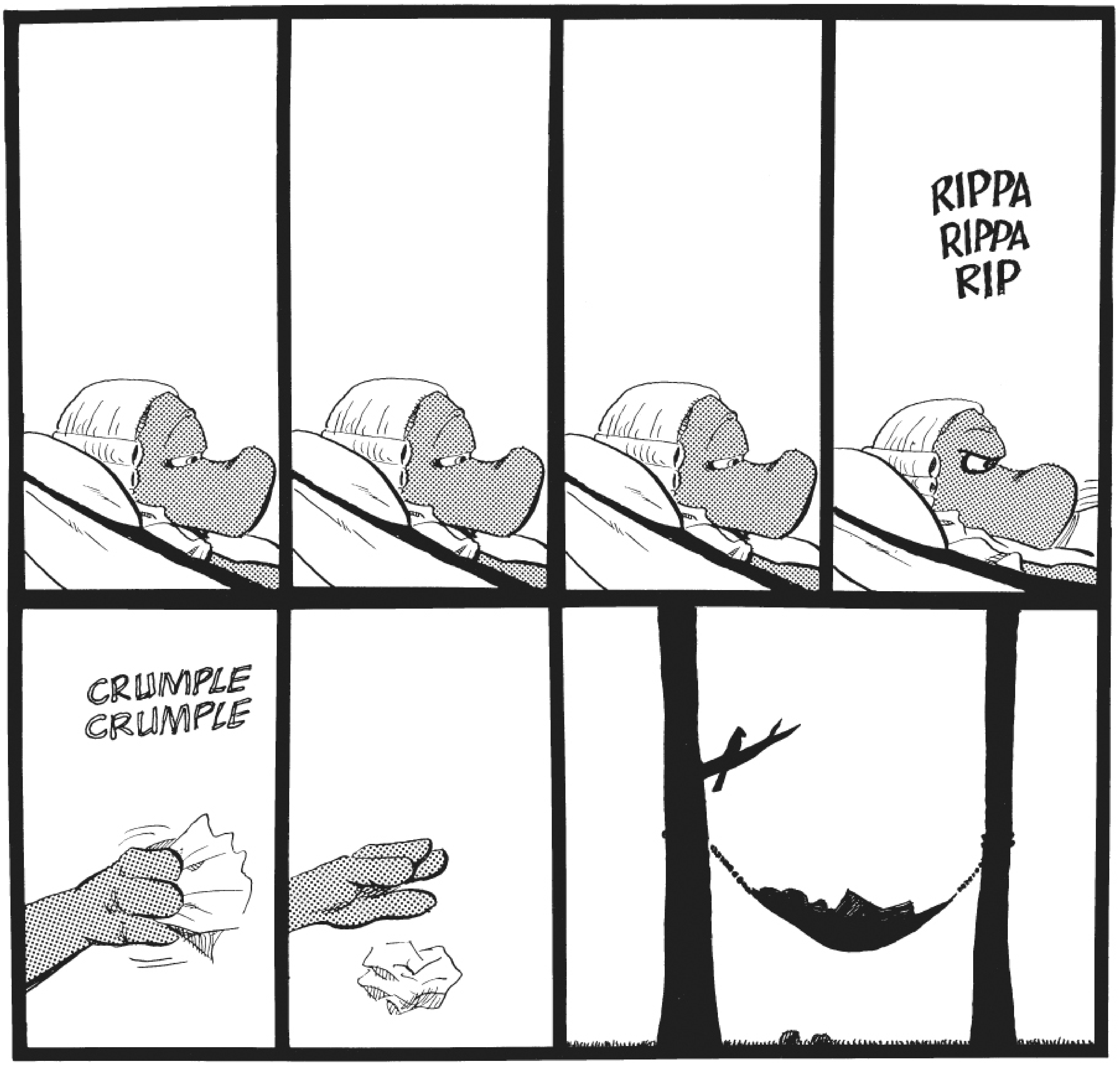
CEREBUS WAS asked all the time if he was the one who was running the government or if he was just a front man for Astoria and her organization. When His Holiness mentioned something to Cerebus a while ago about letting the queens and the priestesses settle things amongst themselves, it made Cerebus think of Astoria. It is very difficult as Prime Minister to figure out if you should listen to the head of the Church that you belong to or to listen to Weisshaupt since he's the one who gave Cerebus back his job.

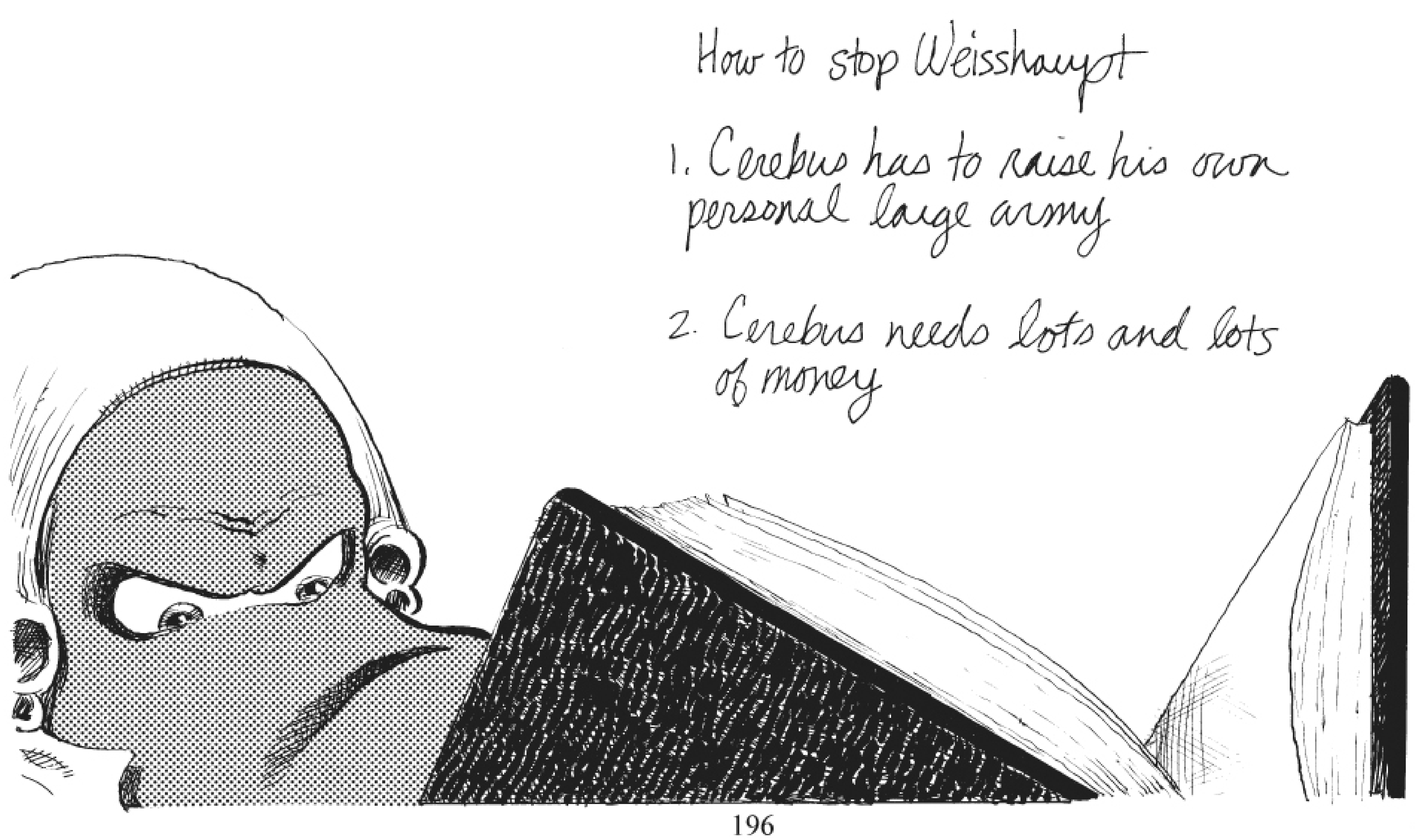
What is Cerebus supposed to do, anyway? How does someone stop Weisshaupt... what would you stop him with. Cerebus doesn't even know what it is exactly that Weisshaupt is doing, except that everyone is doing what he tells them to do, including Cerebus. If all this has something to do with queens and priestesses, how in Tarim's name is *Cerebus* going to stop Weisshaupt. Cerebus doesn't even know how the

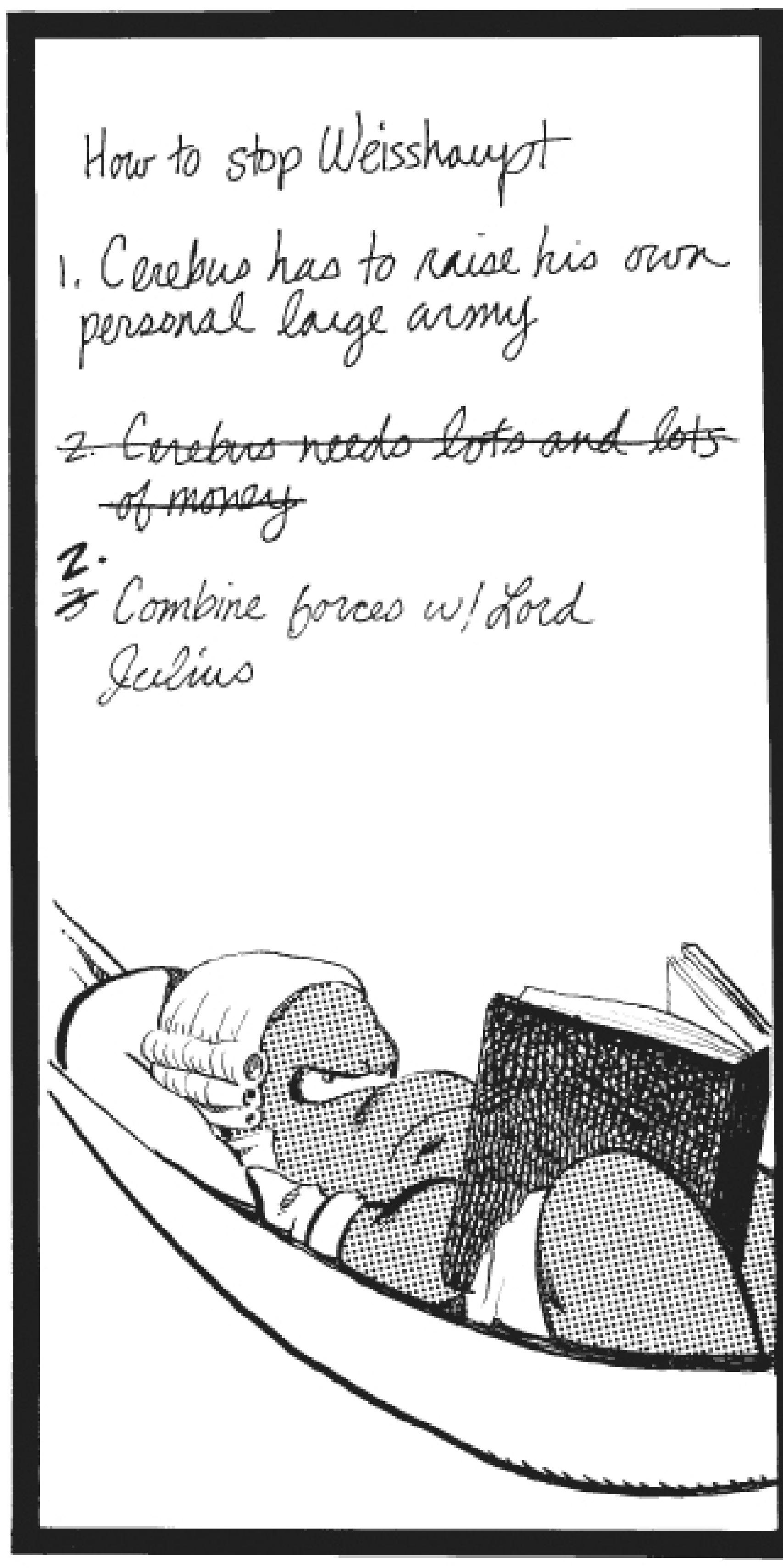


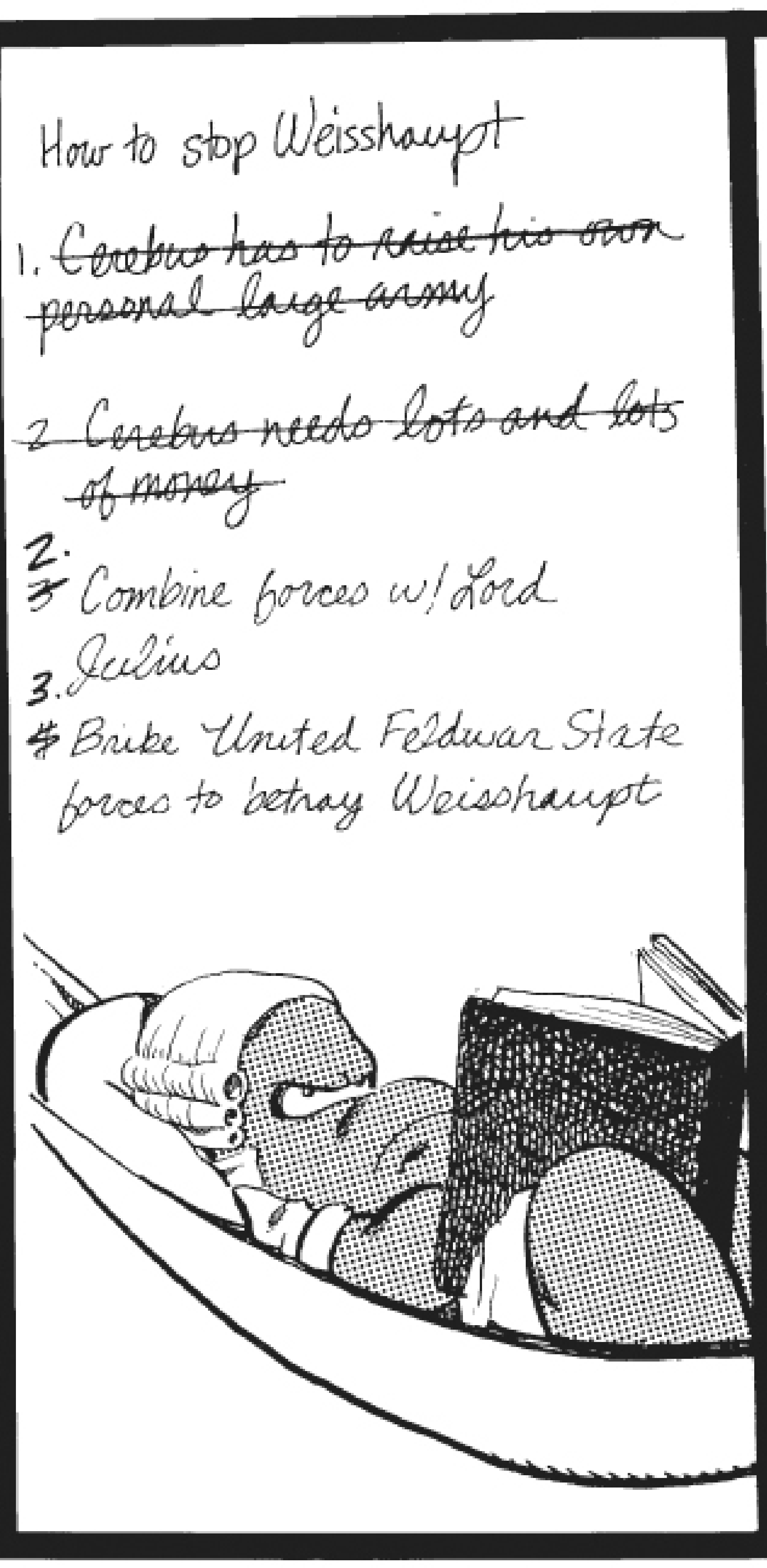


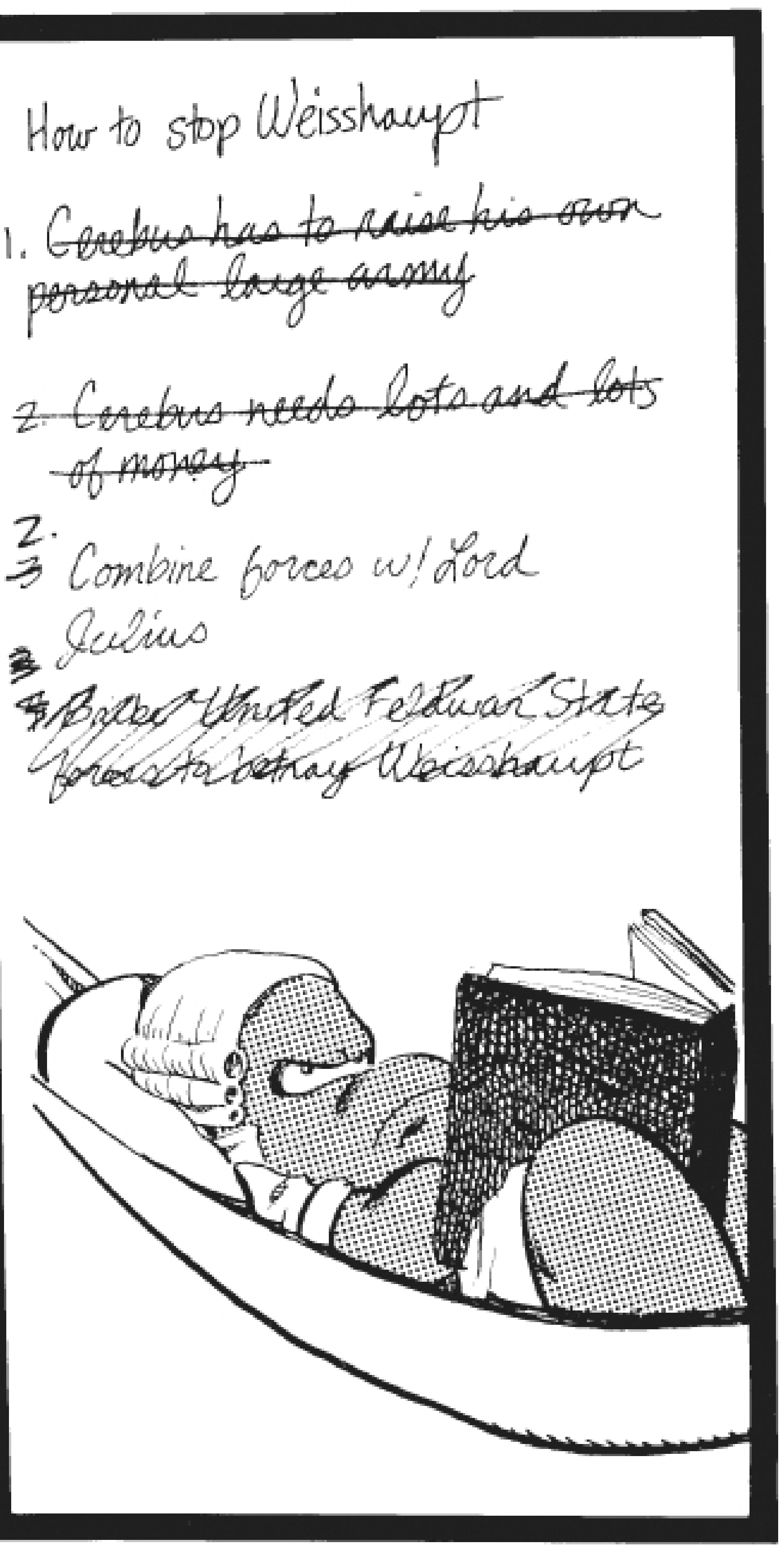
SOMETHING CEREBUS WAS always asked was why Astoria was always around when Cerebus was making decisions. This was for a very good reason. Cerebus would often forget what Cerebus was going to do and Astoria would remind him. After a while Cerebus didn't even bother trying to remember what he was doing. A good leader should always have someone around to remember what he is doing so he has time for more important things like


RIPPA RIPPA RIP
CRUMPLE CRUMPLE


How to stop Weisshaupt
1. Cerebus has to raise his own personal large army
2. Cerebus needs lots and lots of money


How to stop Weisshaupt
1. Cerebus has to raise his own personal large army
~~2. Cerebus needs lots and lots of money~~
~~3~~ 2. Combine forces w/ Lord Julius


How to stop Weisshaupt
1. ~~Cerebus has to raise his own personal large army~~
~~2. Cerebus needs lots and lots of money~~
~~3~~ 2. Combine forces w/ Lord Julius
~~4~~ 3. Bribe United Feldwar State forces to betray Weisshaupt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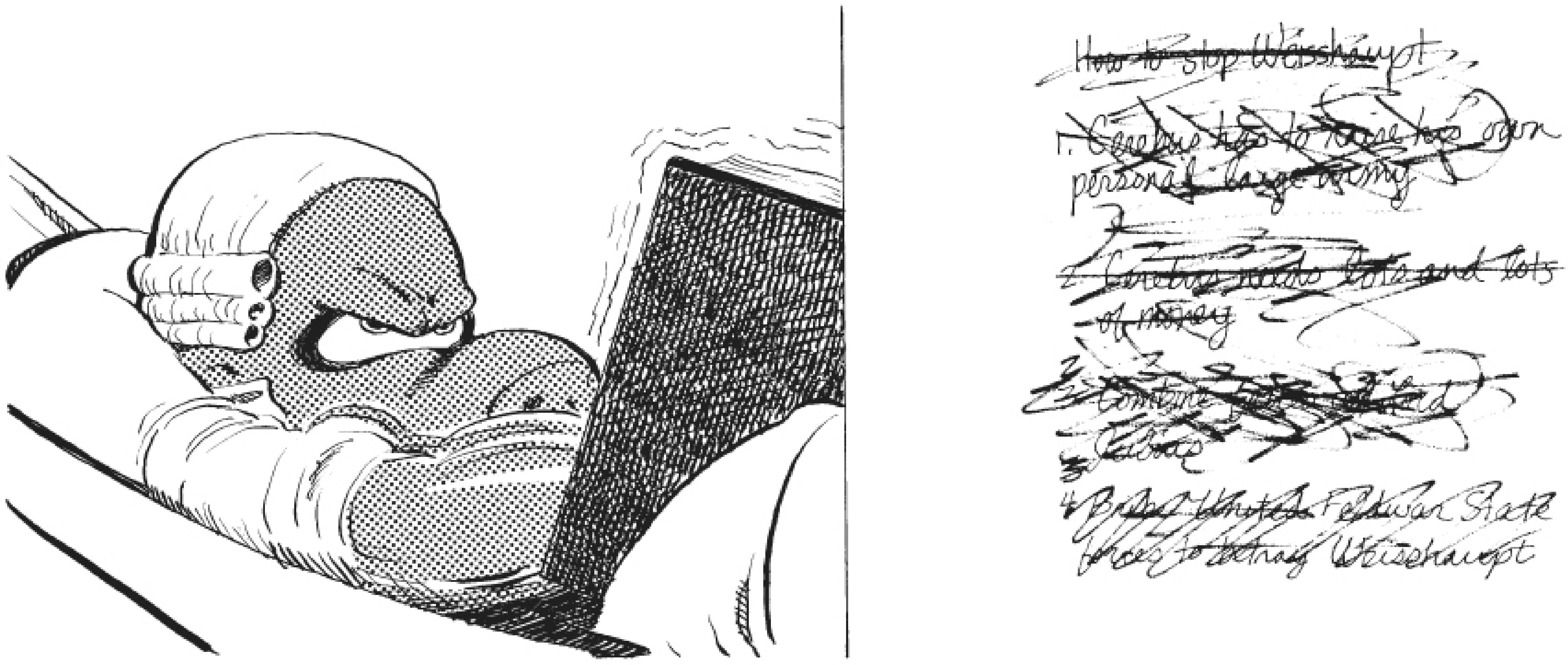
~~How to stop Weisshaupt~~
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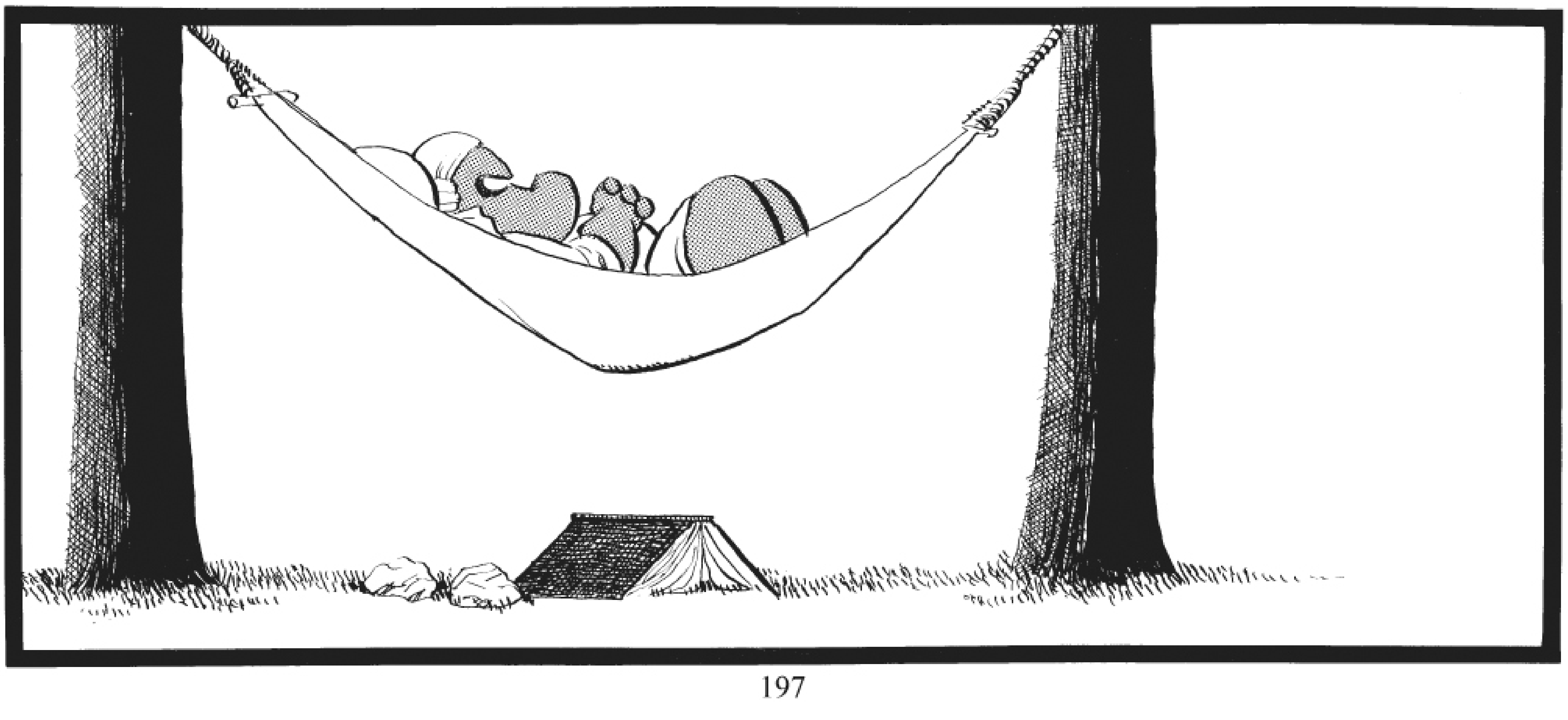
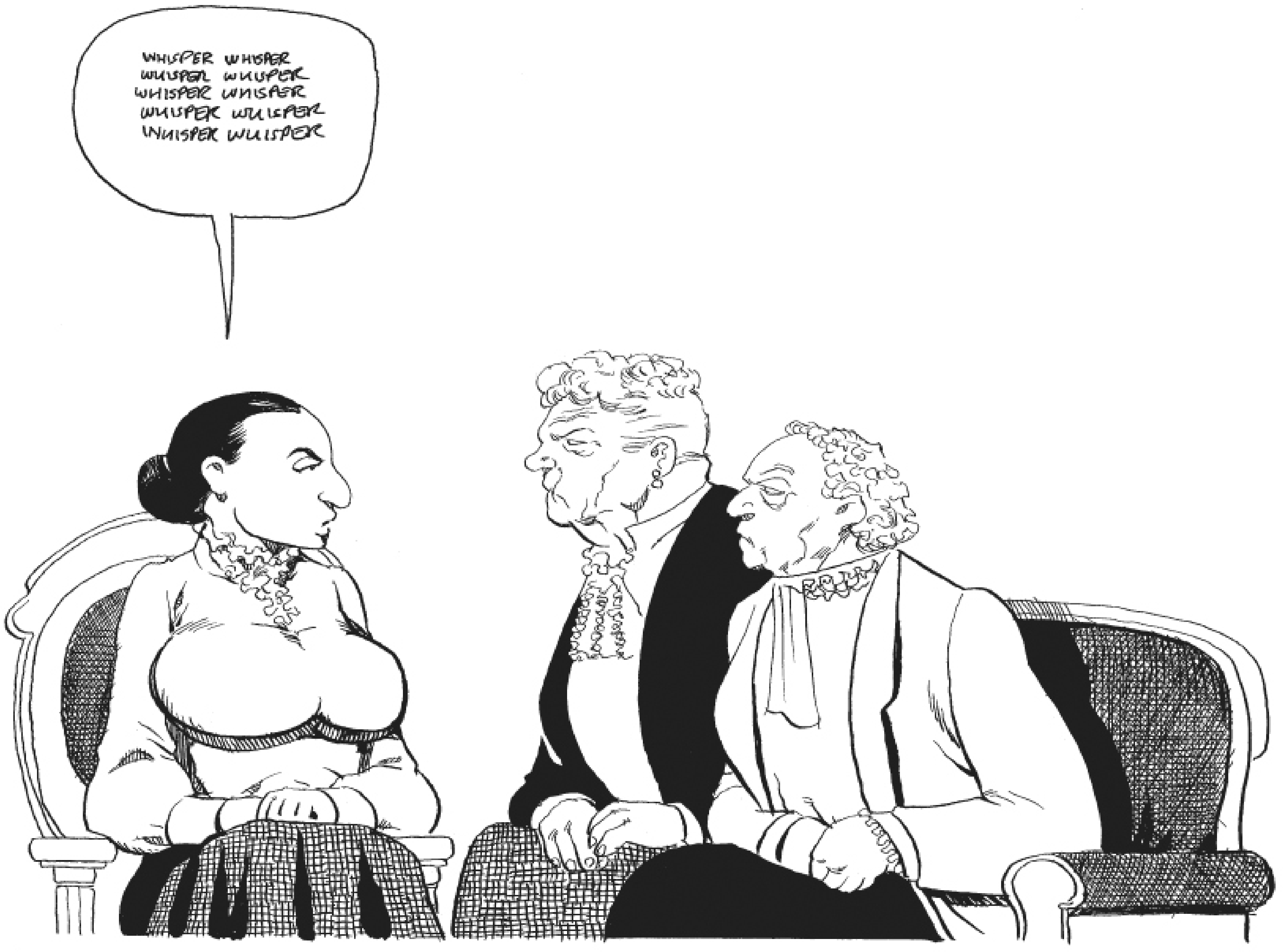


MRS. TYNSDALE-CLYDE'S TEA


WHISPER WHISPER
WHISPER WHISPER
WHISPER WHISPER
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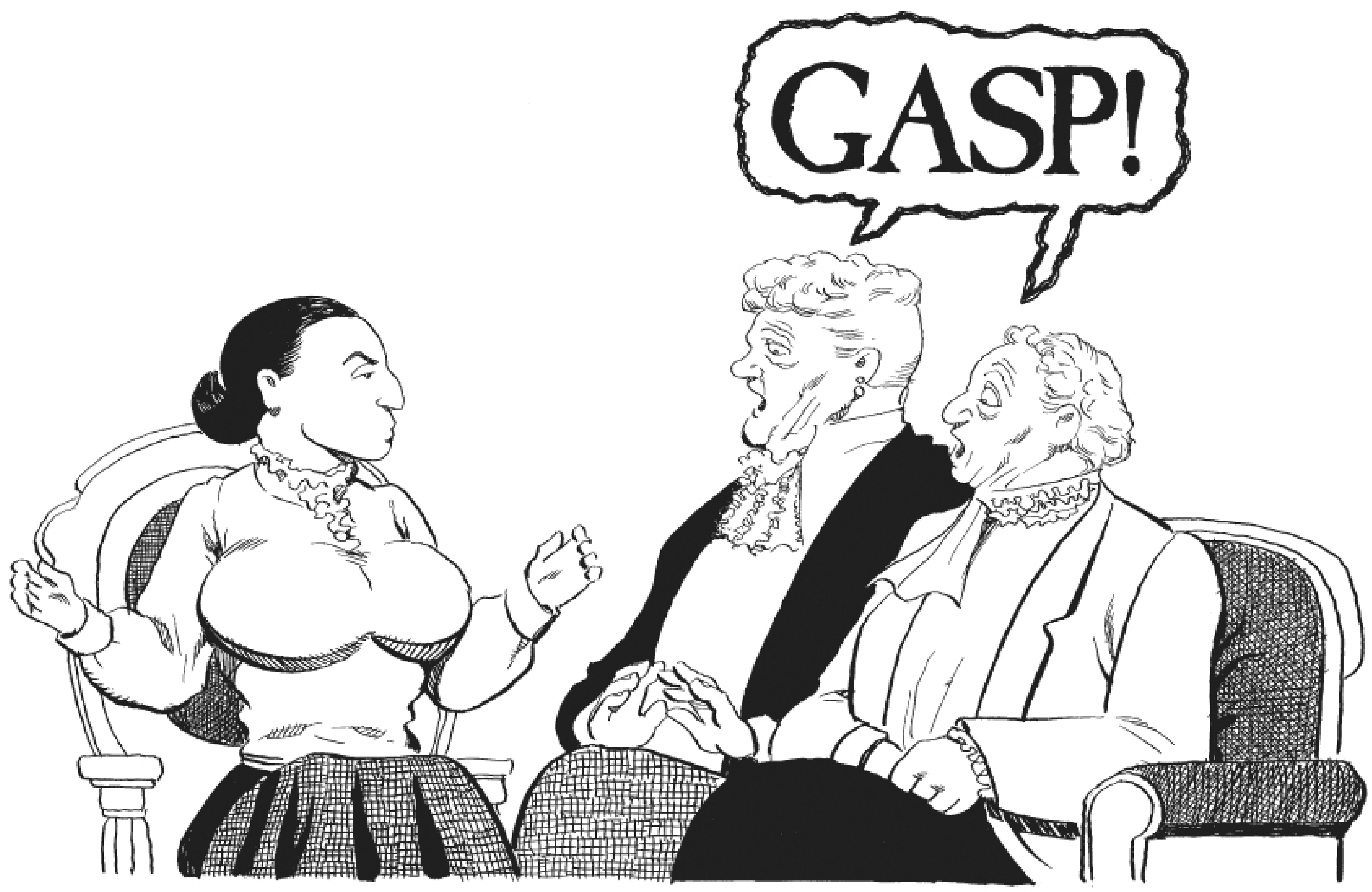
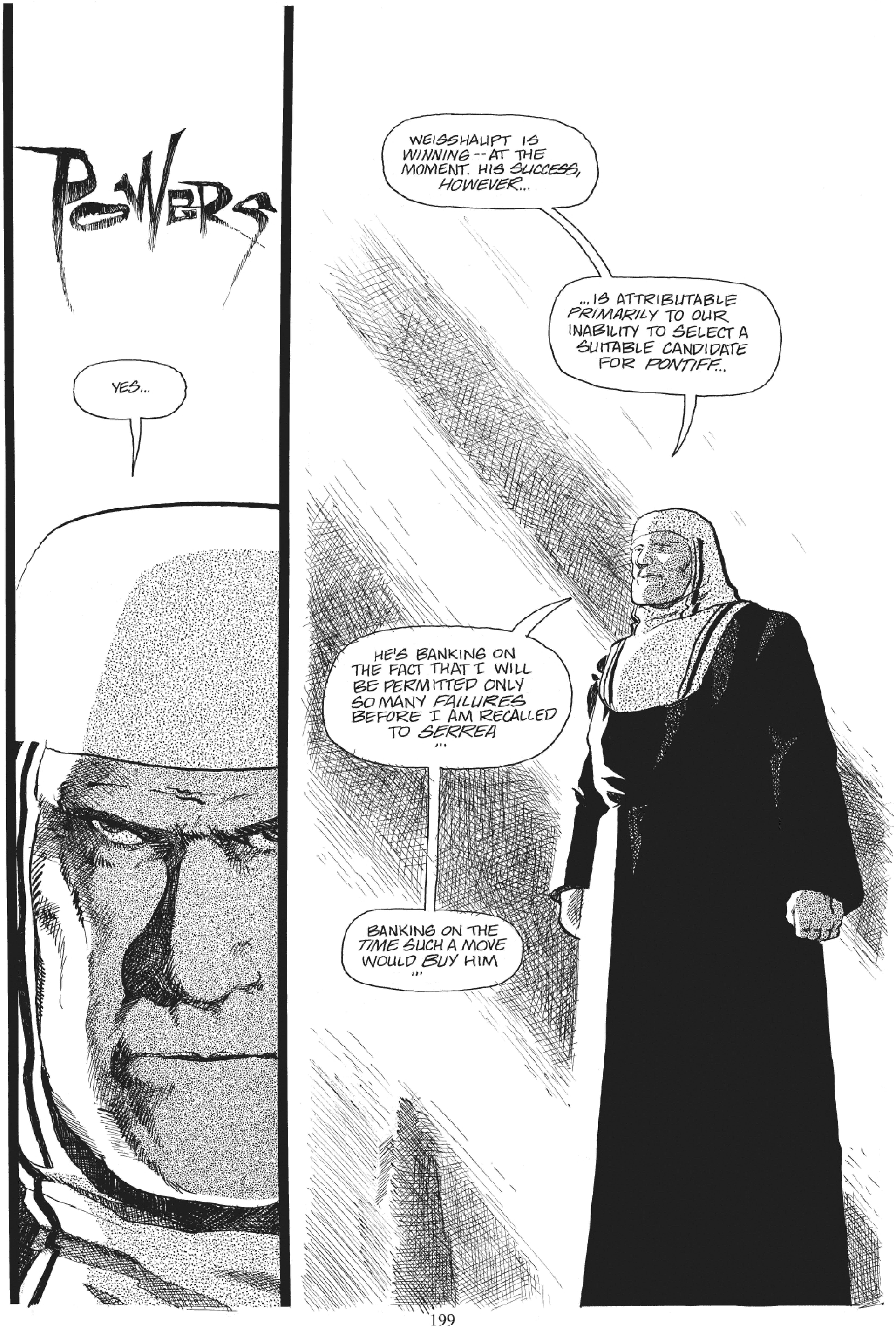
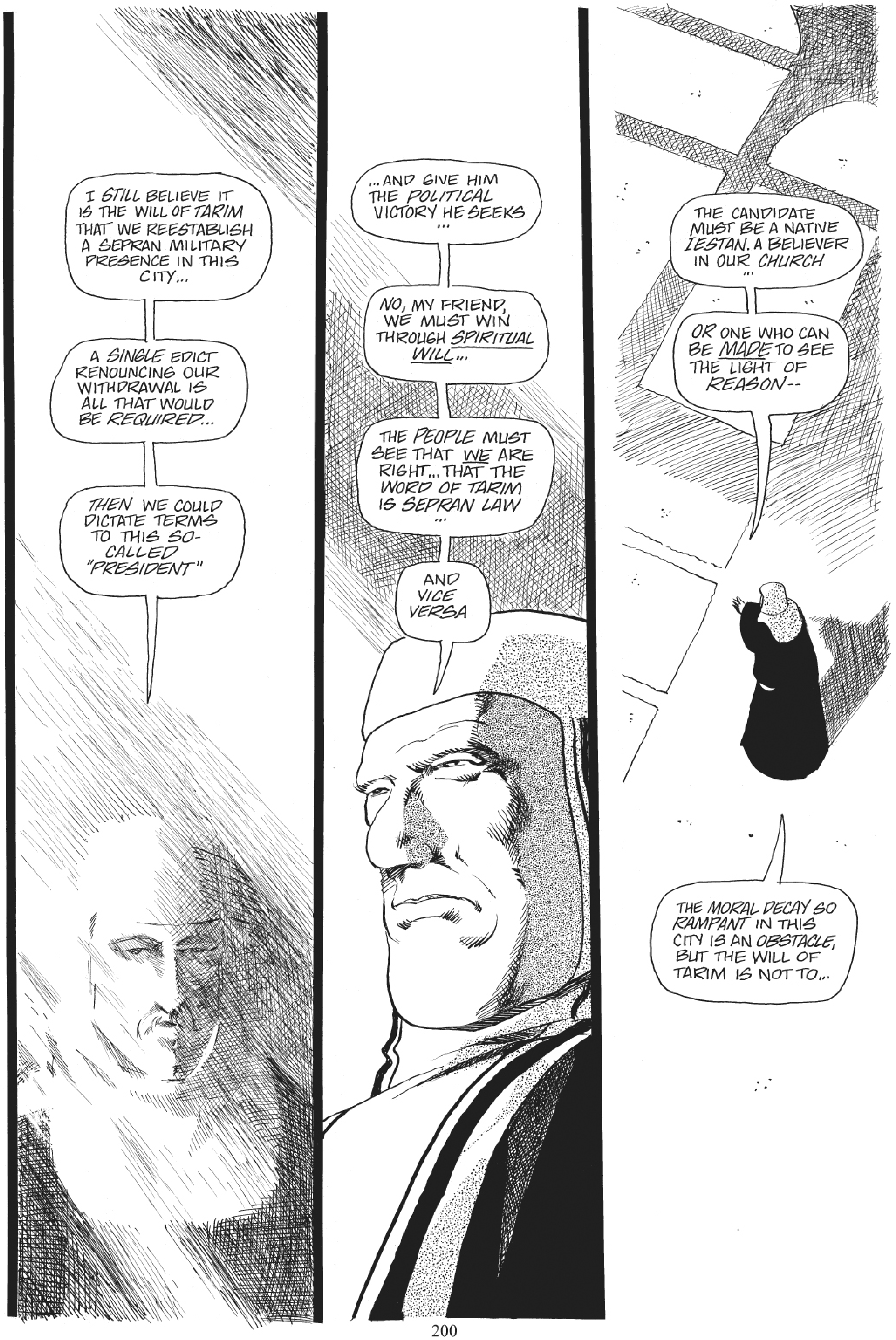
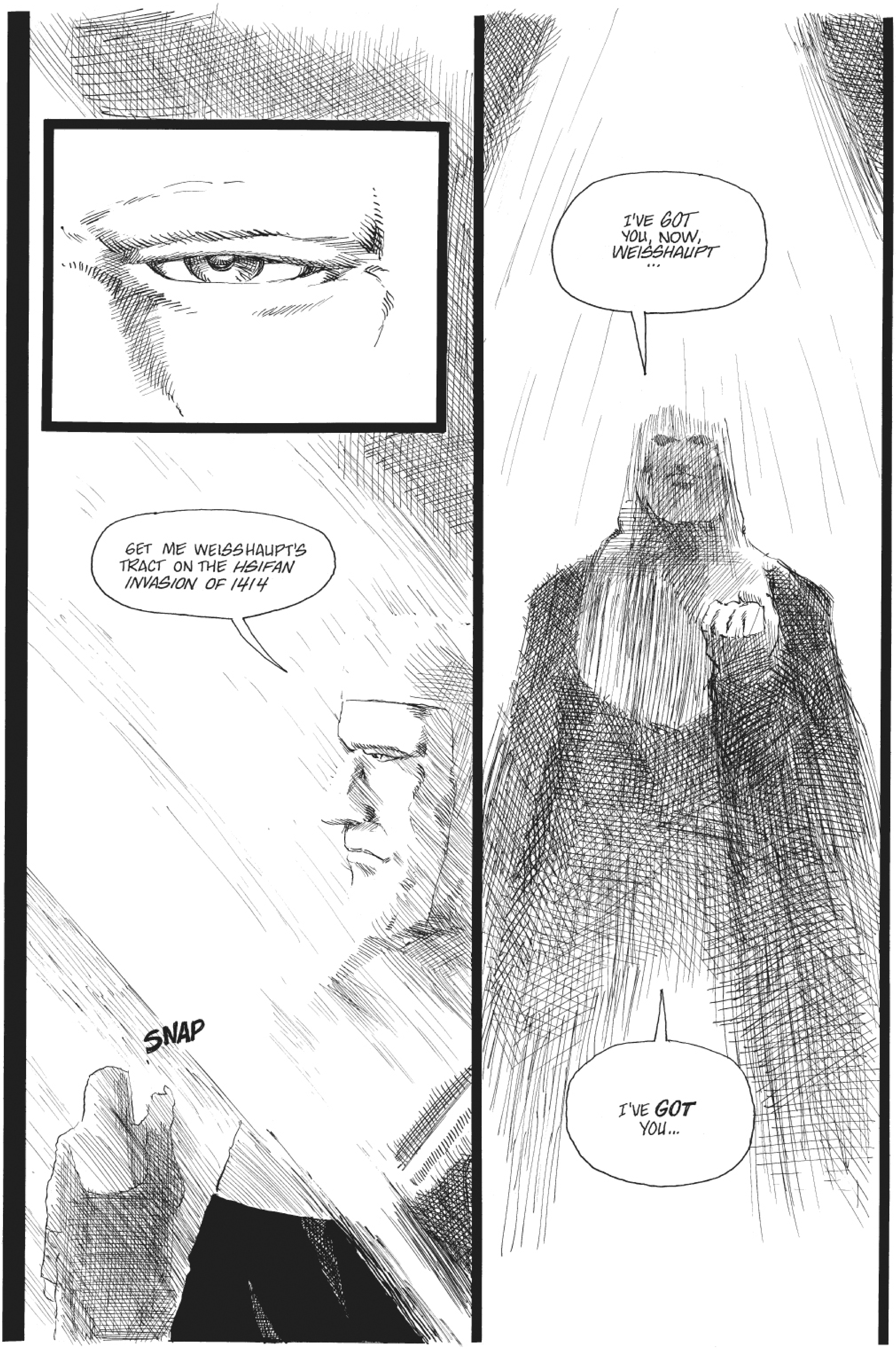
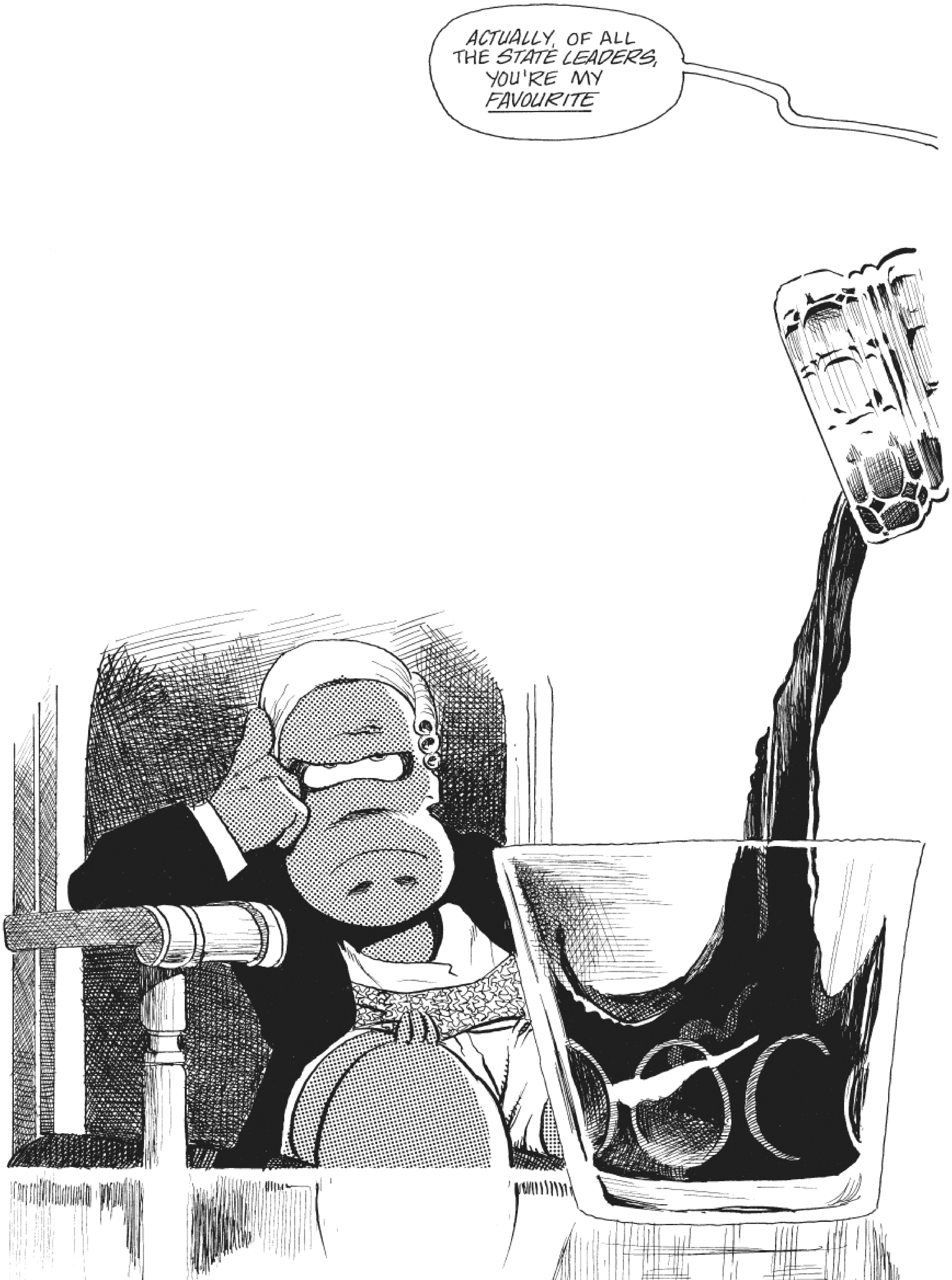
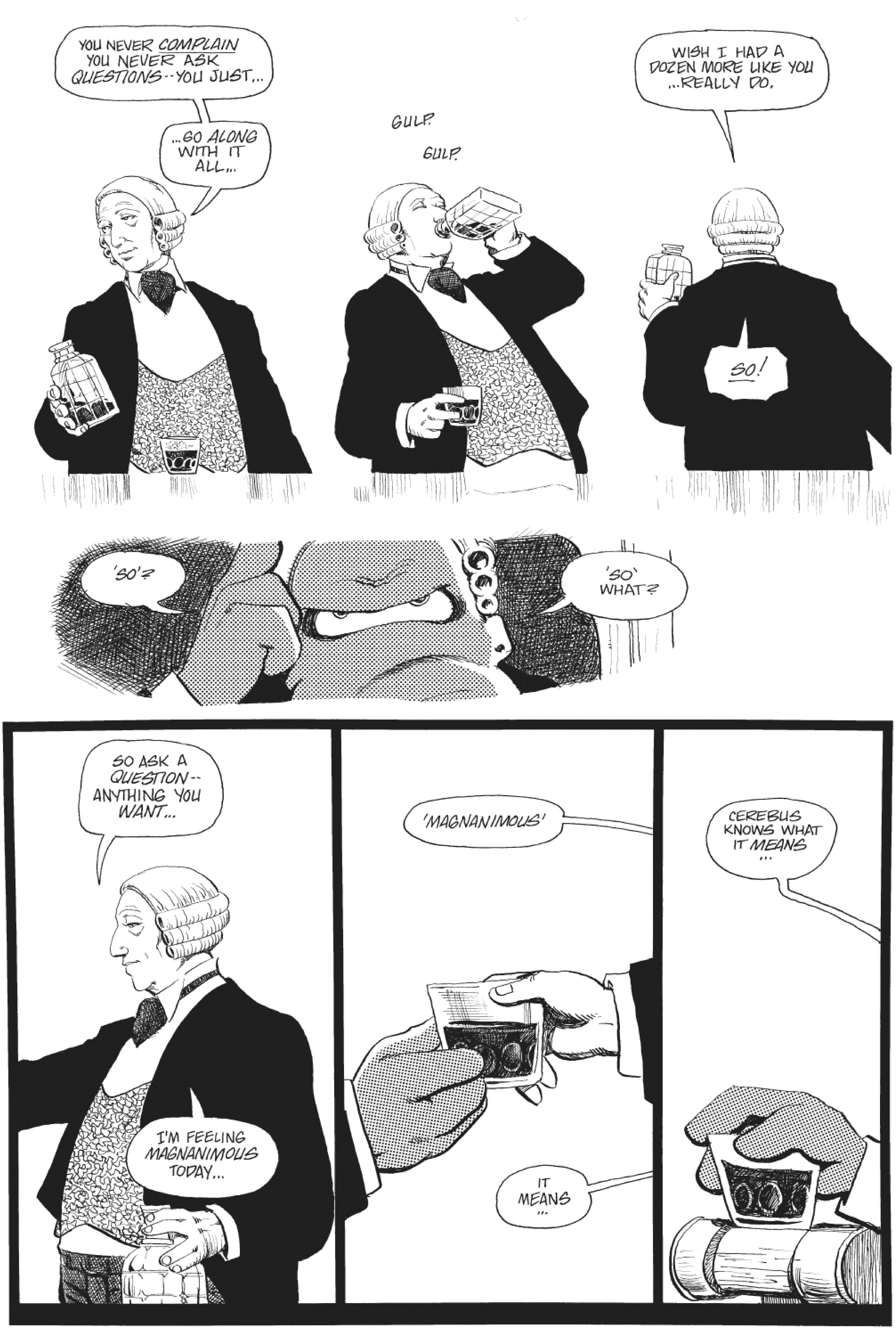


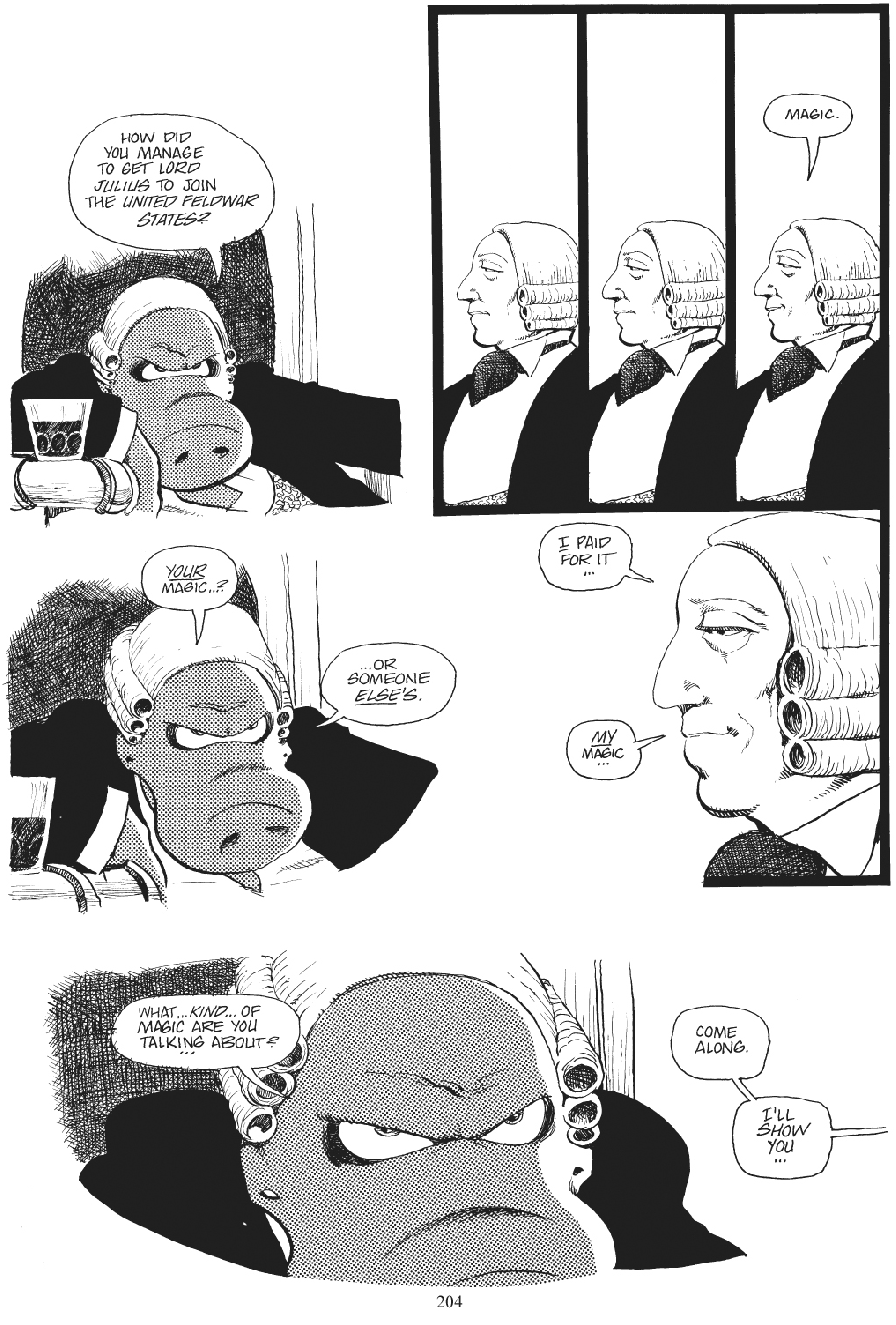

POWERS
YES...
WEISSHAUPT IS *WINNING* -- AT THE MOMENT. HIS *SUCCESS*, *HOWEVER*...
...IS ATTRIBUTABLE *PRIMARILY* TO OUR INABILITY TO SELECT A SUITABLE CANDIDATE FOR *PONTIFF*...
HE'S BANKING ON THE FACT THAT I WILL BE PERMITTED ONLY SO MANY *FAILURES* BEFORE I AM RECALLED TO *SERREA*...
BANKING ON THE *TIME* SUCH A MOVE WOULD *BUY* HIM...

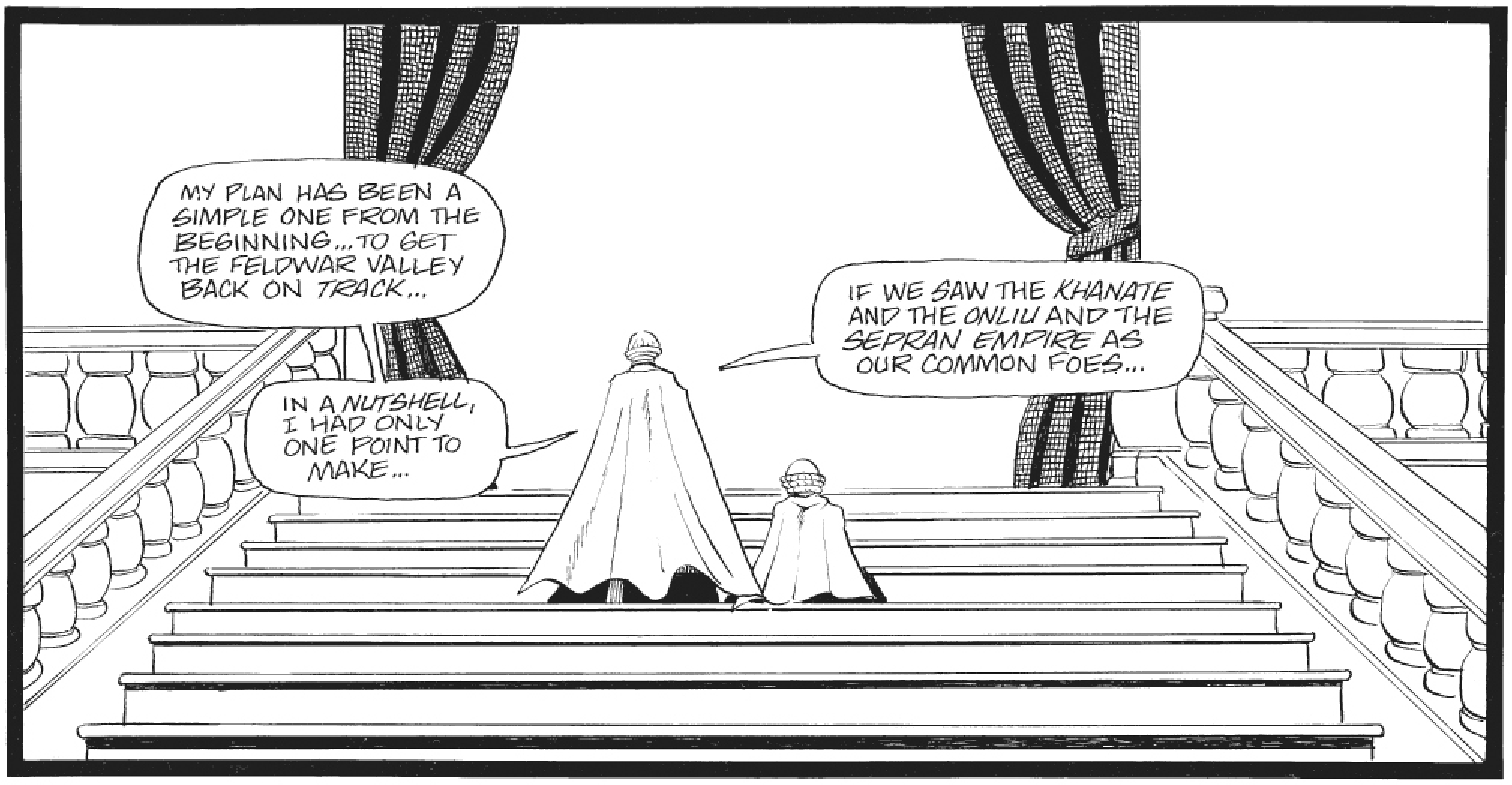

I STILL BELIEVE IT IS THE WILL OF TARIM THAT WE REESTABLISH A SEPRAN MILITARY PRESENCE IN THIS CITY...
A SINGLE EDICT RENOUNCING OUR WITHDRAWAL IS ALL THAT WOULD BE REQUIRED...
THEN WE COULD DICTATE TERMS TO THIS SO-CALLED "PRESIDENT"
...AND GIVE HIM THE POLITICAL VICTORY HE SEEKS ...
NO, MY FRIEND, WE MUST WIN THROUGH SPIRITUAL WILL...
THE PEOPLE MUST SEE THAT WE ARE RIGHT... THAT THE WORD OF TARIM IS SEPRAN LAW ...
AND VICE VERSA
THE CANDIDATE MUST BE A NATIVE IESTAN. A BELIEVER IN OUR CHURCH ...
OR ONE WHO CAN BE MADE TO SEE THE LIGHT OF REASON--
THE MORAL DECAY SO RAMPANT IN THIS CITY IS AN OBSTACLE, BUT THE WILL OF TARIM IS NOT TO...

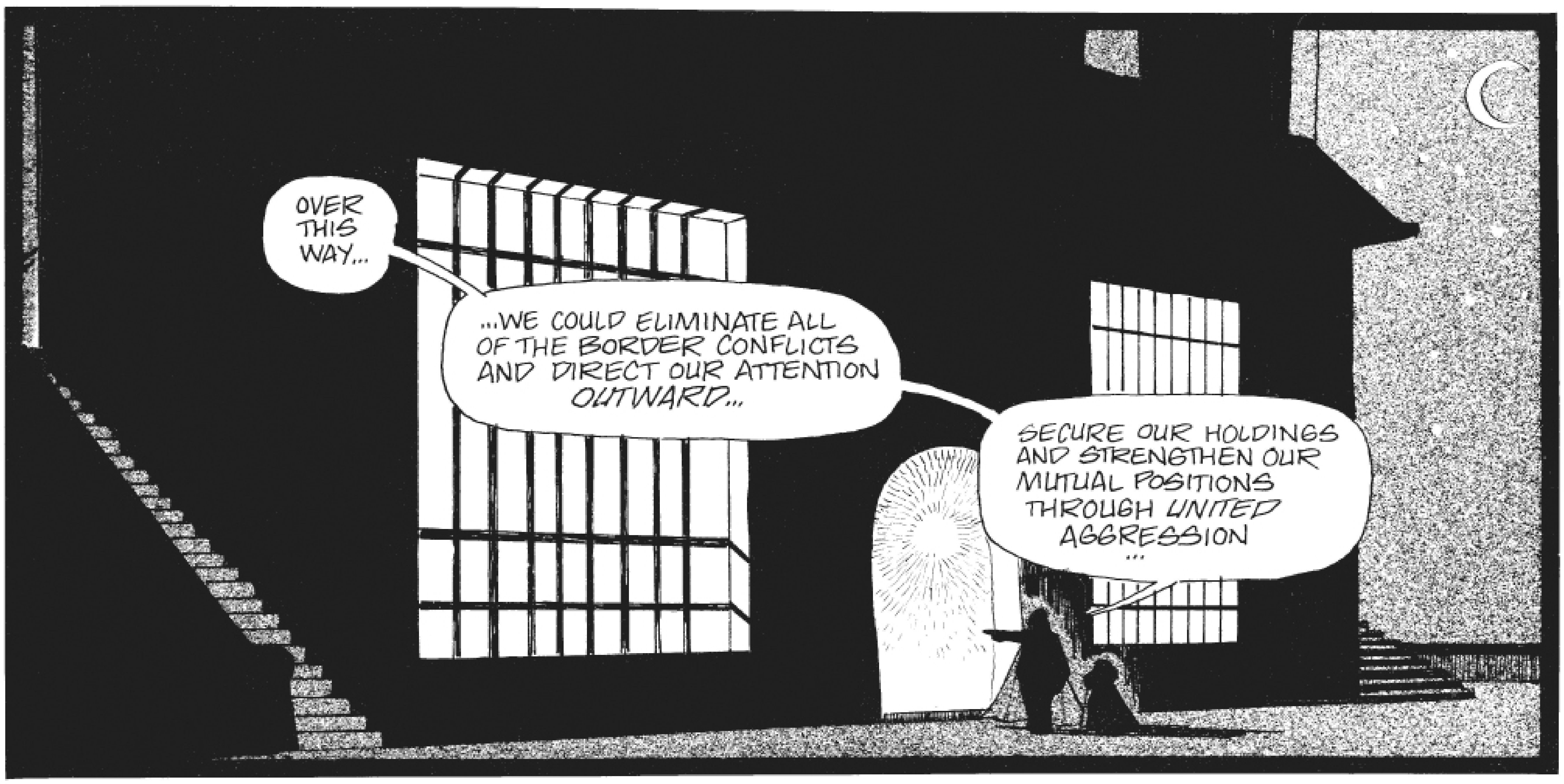

GET ME WEISSHAUPT'S TRACT ON THE *HSIFAN INVASION OF 1414*
SNAP
I'VE *GOT* YOU, NOW, *WEISSHAUPT* ...
I'VE **GOT** YOU...

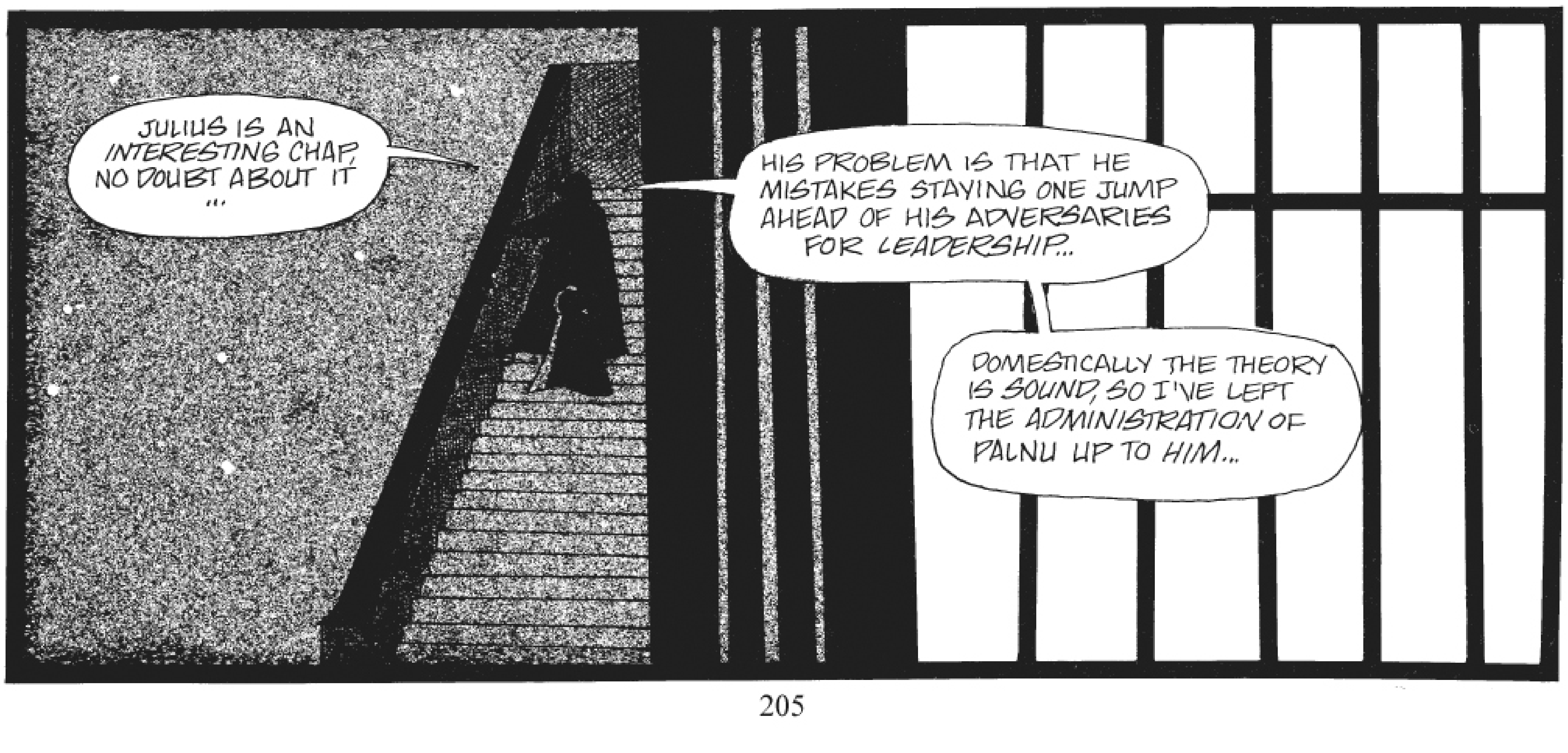

ACTUALLY, OF ALL THE *STATE LEADERS,* YOU'RE MY *FAVOURITE*

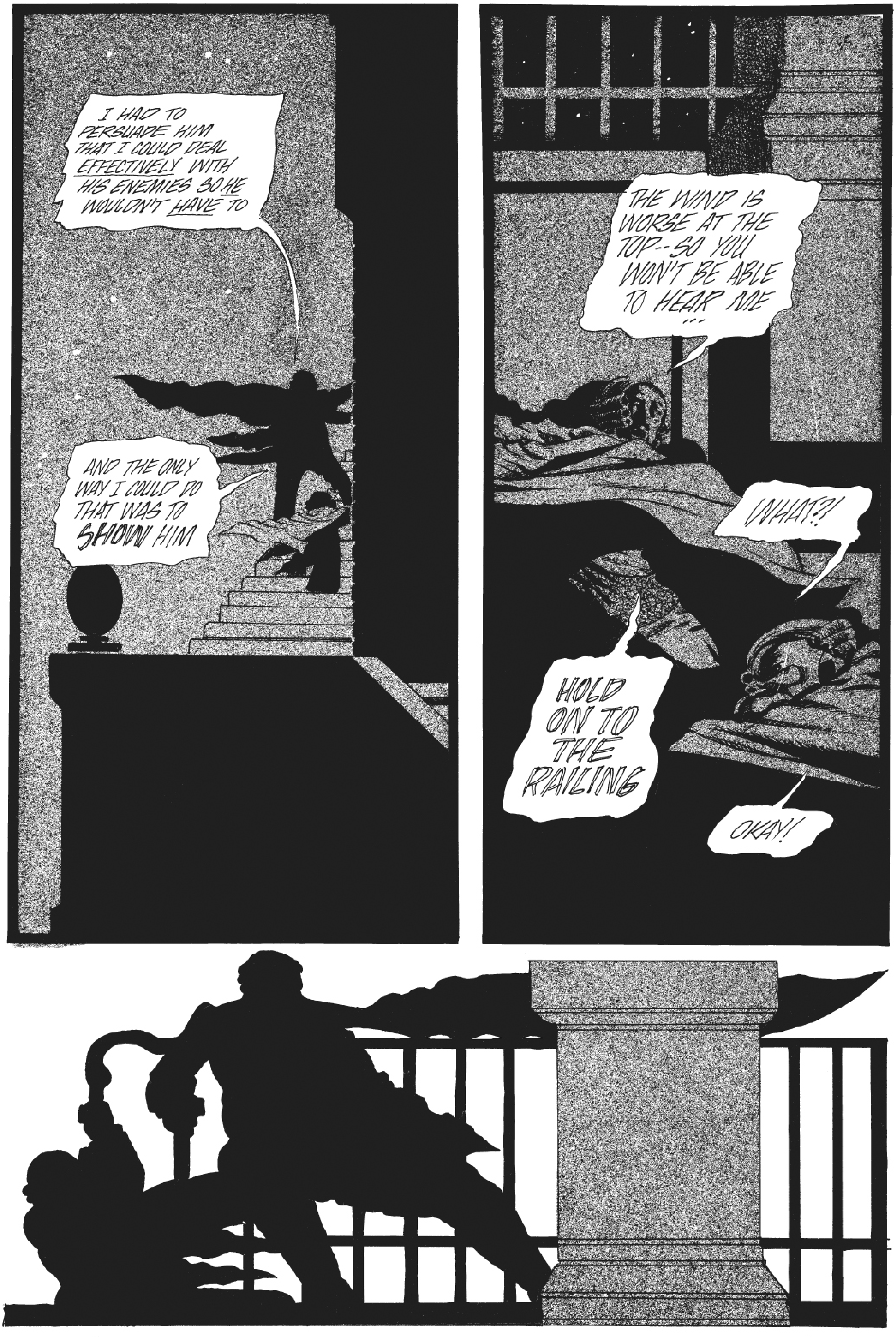

YOU NEVER COMPLAIN YOU NEVER ASK QUESTIONS--YOU JUST,...
...GO ALONG WITH IT ALL...
GULP
GULP
WISH I HAD A DOZEN MORE LIKE YOU ...REALLY DO.
SO!
'SO'?
'SO' WHAT?
SO ASK A QUESTION-- ANYTHING YOU WANT...
I'M FEELING MAGNANIMOUS TODAY...
'MAGNANIMOUS'
IT MEANS ...
CEREBUS KNOWS WHAT IT MEANS ...

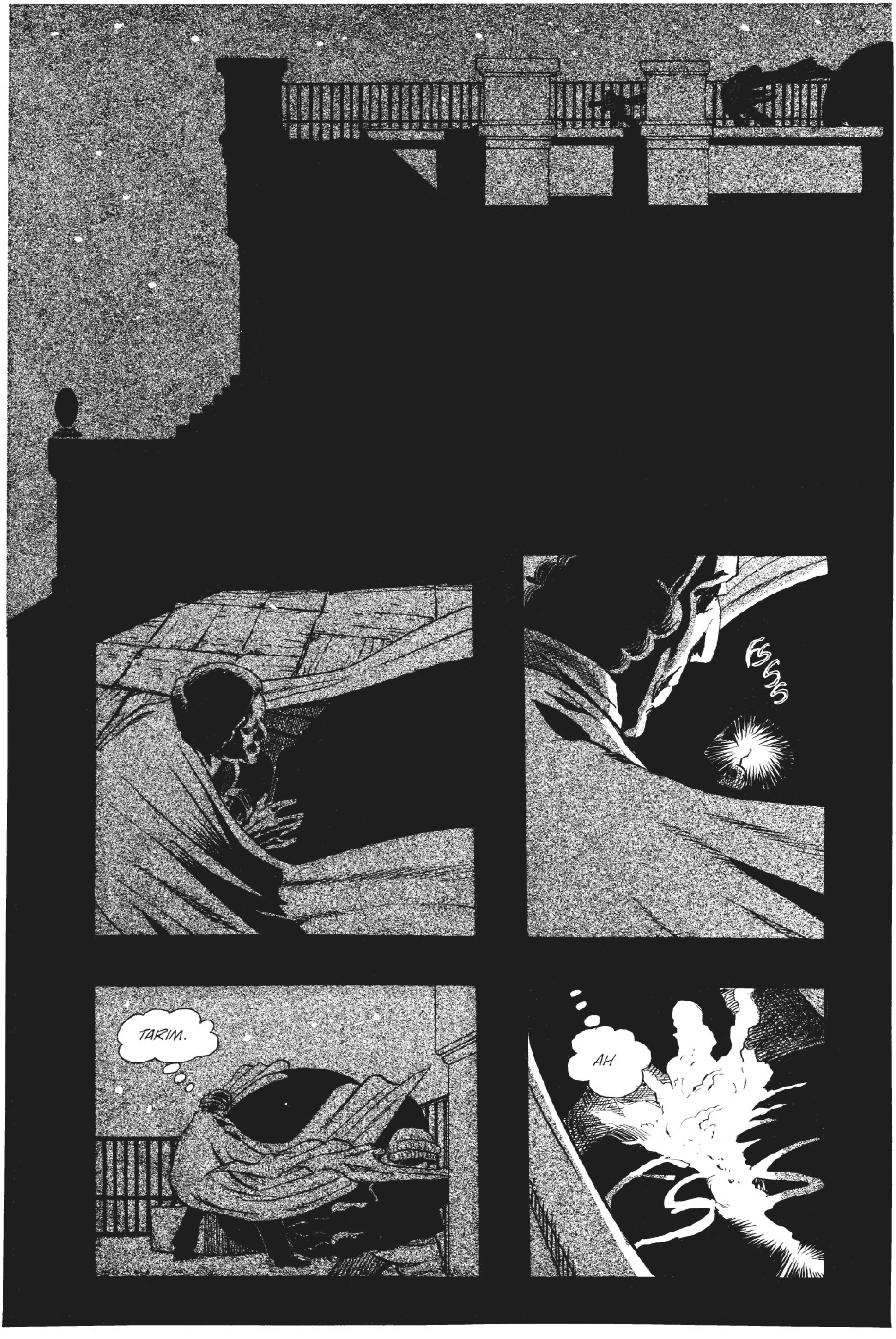

HOW DID YOU MANAGE TO GET LORD JULIUS TO JOIN THE UNITED FELDWAR STATES?
MAGIC.
YOUR MAGIC..?
...OR SOMEONE ELSE'S.
I PAID FOR IT ...
MY MAGIC ...
WHAT...KIND...OF MAGIC ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? ...
COME ALONG.
I'LL SHOW YOU ...

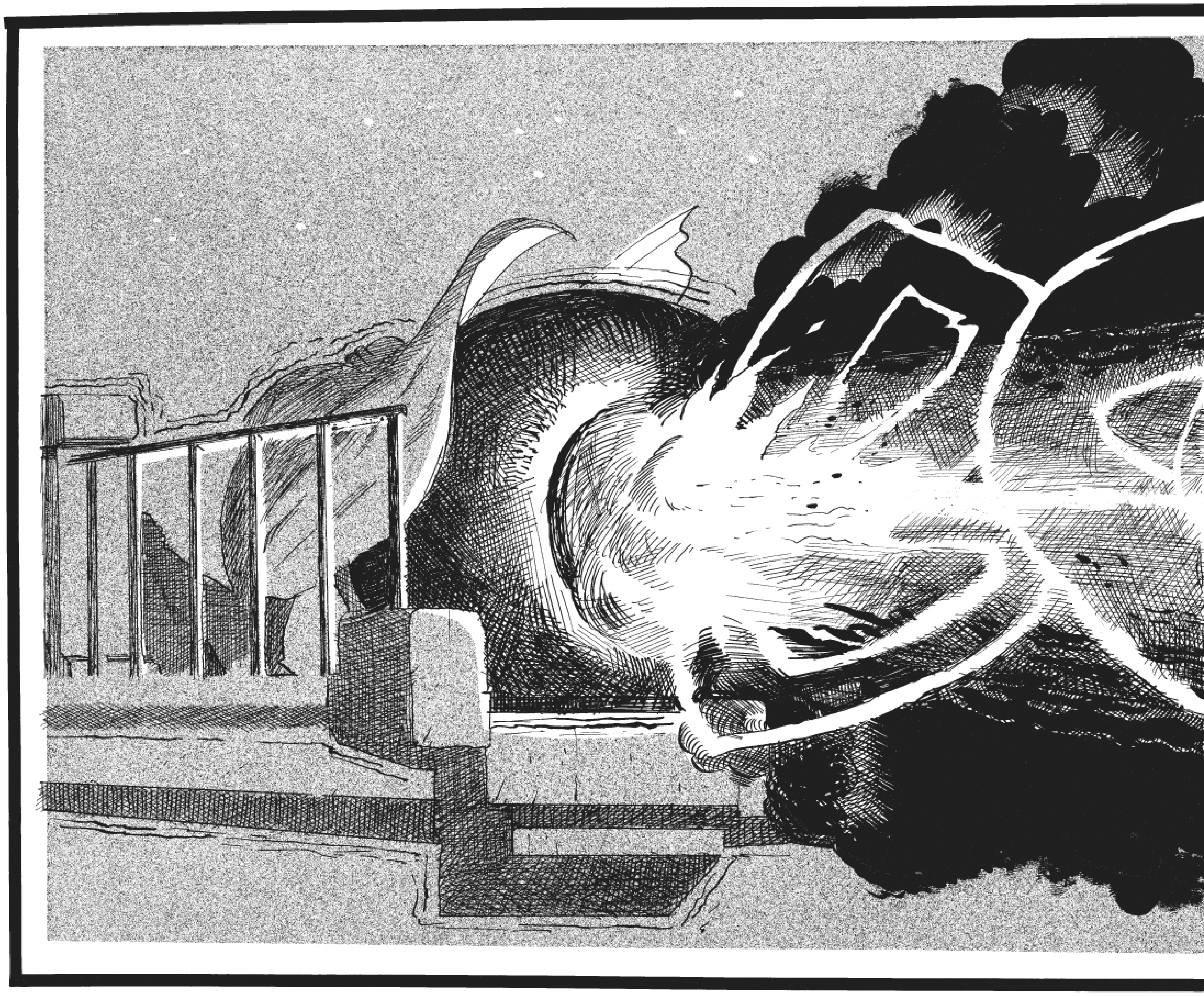

MY PLAN HAS BEEN A SIMPLE ONE FROM THE BEGINNING... TO GET THE FELDWAR VALLEY BACK ON *TRACK*...
IN A *NUTSHELL*, I HAD ONLY ONE POINT TO MAKE...
IF WE SAW THE *KHANATE* AND THE *ONLIU* AND THE *SEPRAN EMPIRE* AS OUR COMMON FOES...

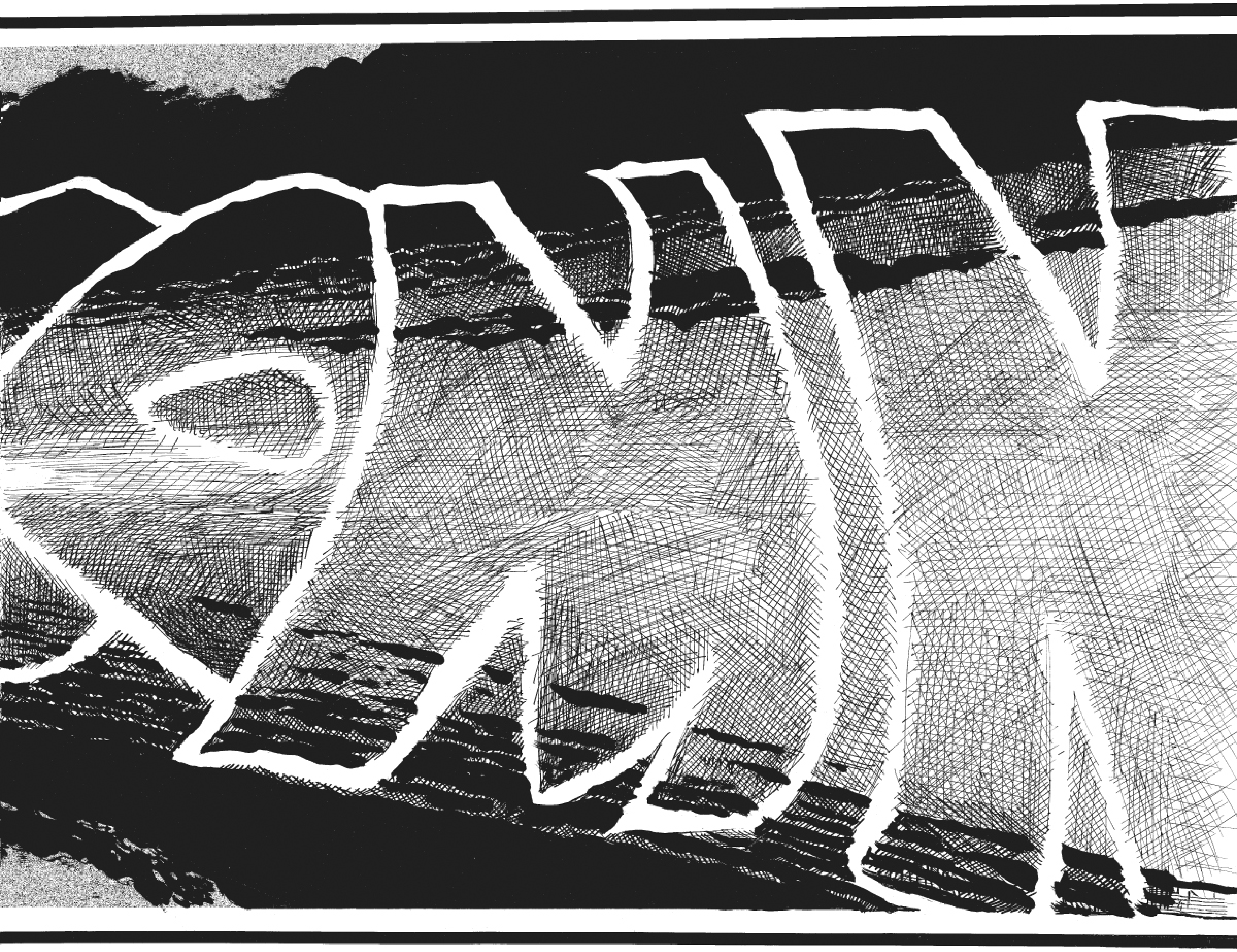

OVER THIS WAY...
...WE COULD ELIMINATE ALL OF THE BORDER CONFLICTS AND DIRECT OUR ATTENTION *OUTWARD*...
SECURE OUR HOLDINGS AND STRENGTHEN OUR MUTUAL POSITIONS THROUGH *UNITED* AGGRESSION ...

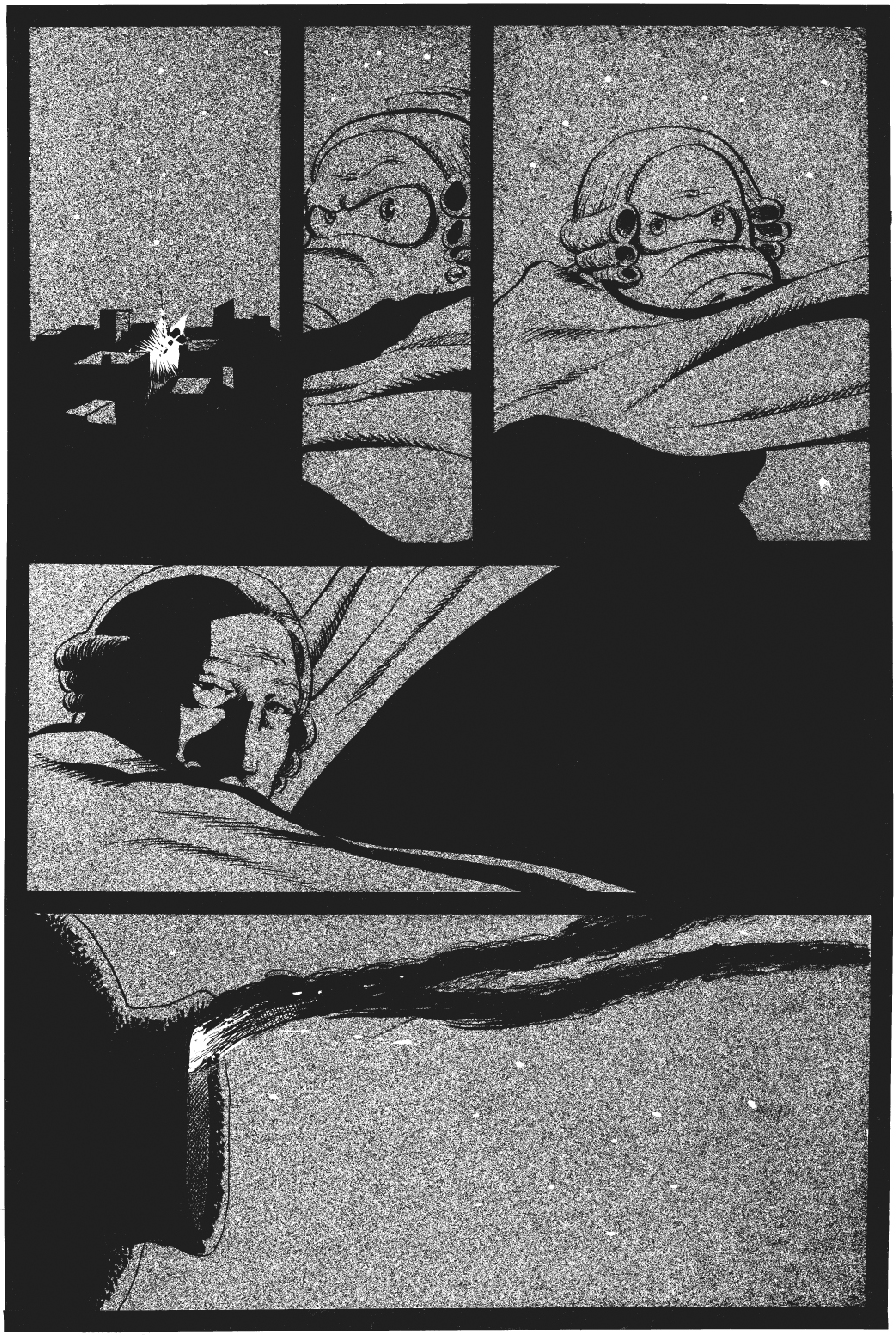

JULIUS IS AN *INTERESTING CHAP*, NO DOUBT ABOUT IT ...
HIS PROBLEM IS THAT HE MISTAKES STAYING ONE JUMP AHEAD OF HIS ADVERSARIES FOR *LEADERSHIP*...
DOMESTICALLY THE THEORY IS *SOUND*, SO I'VE LEFT THE *ADMINISTRATION* OF PALNU UP TO *HIM*...


I HAD TO PERSUADE HIM THAT I COULD DEAL EFFECTIVELY WITH HIS ENEMIES SO HE WOULDN'T HAVE TO
AND THE ONLY WAY I COULD DO THAT WAS TO SHOW HIM
THE WIND IS WORSE AT THE TOP--SO YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO HEAR ME ...
WHAT?!
HOLD ON TO THE RAILING
OKAY!

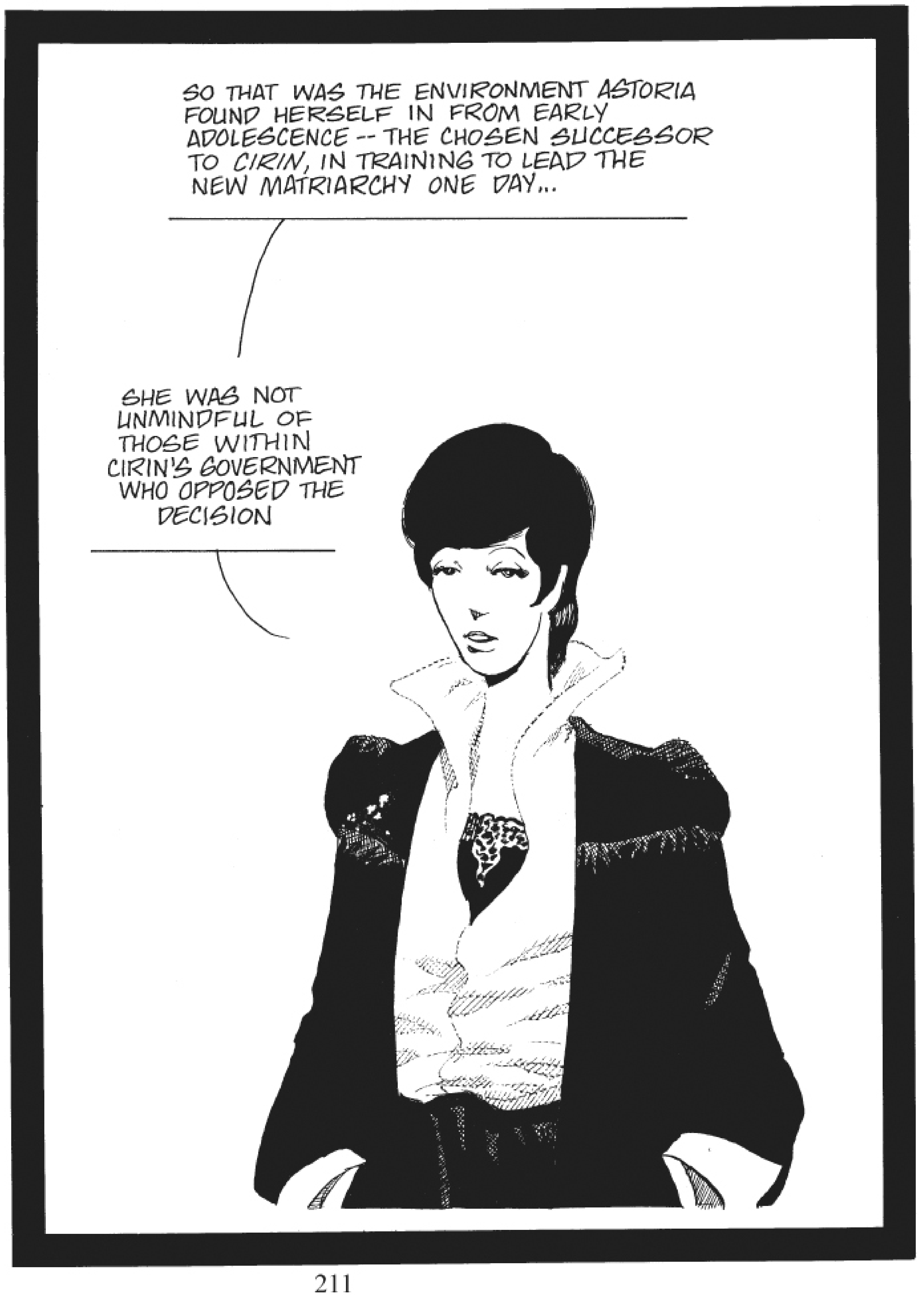

FSSSS
TARIM.
AH

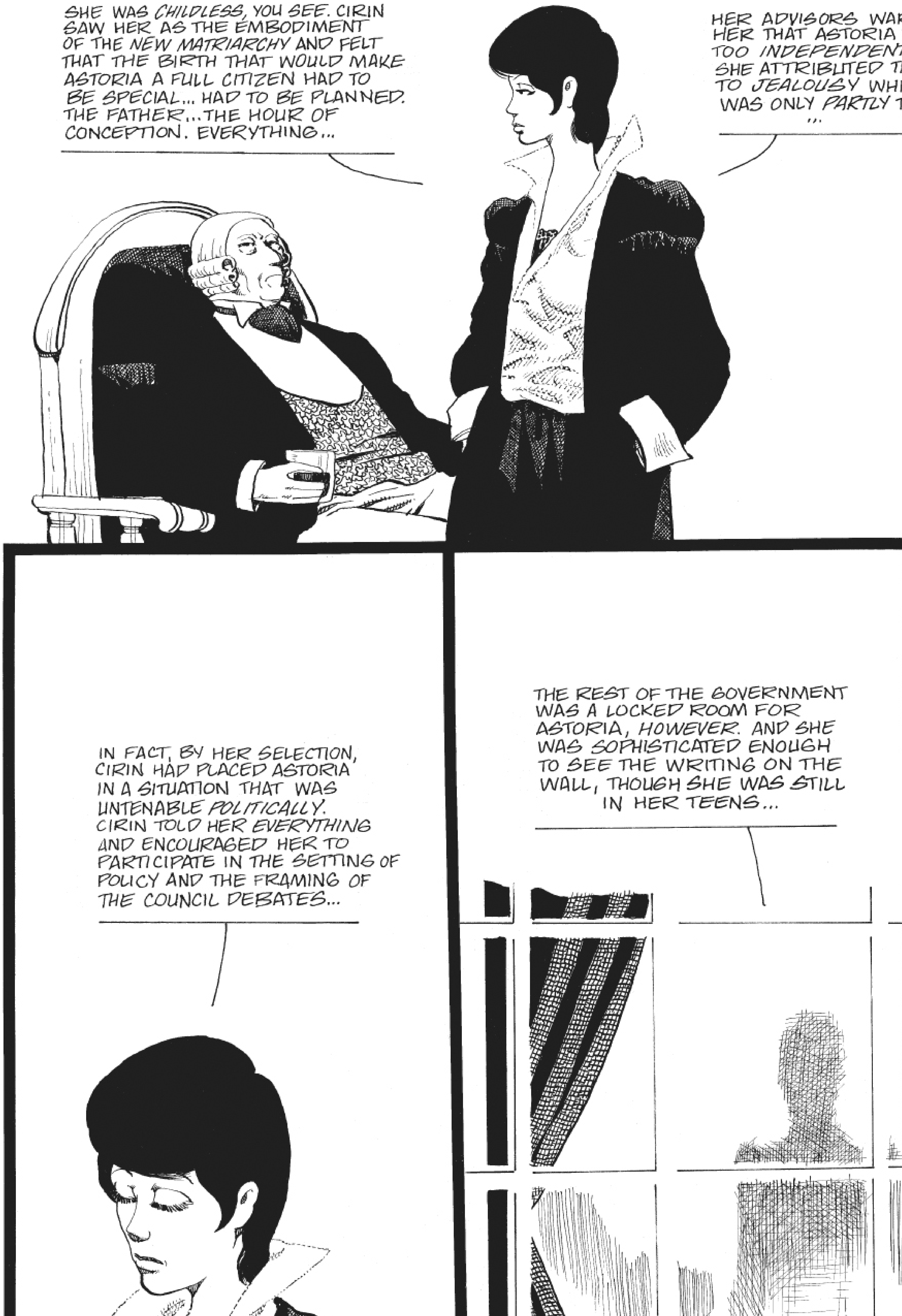


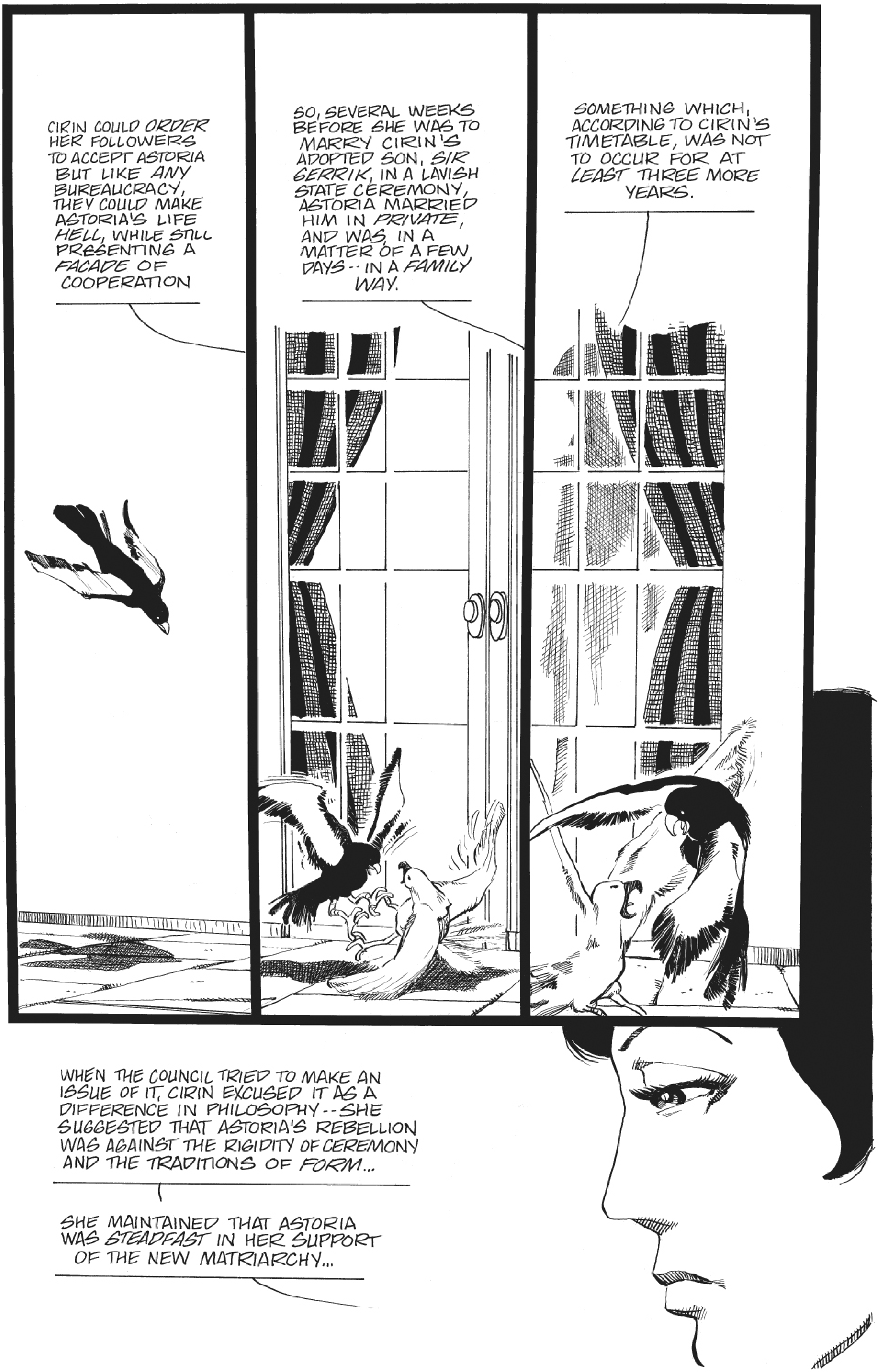


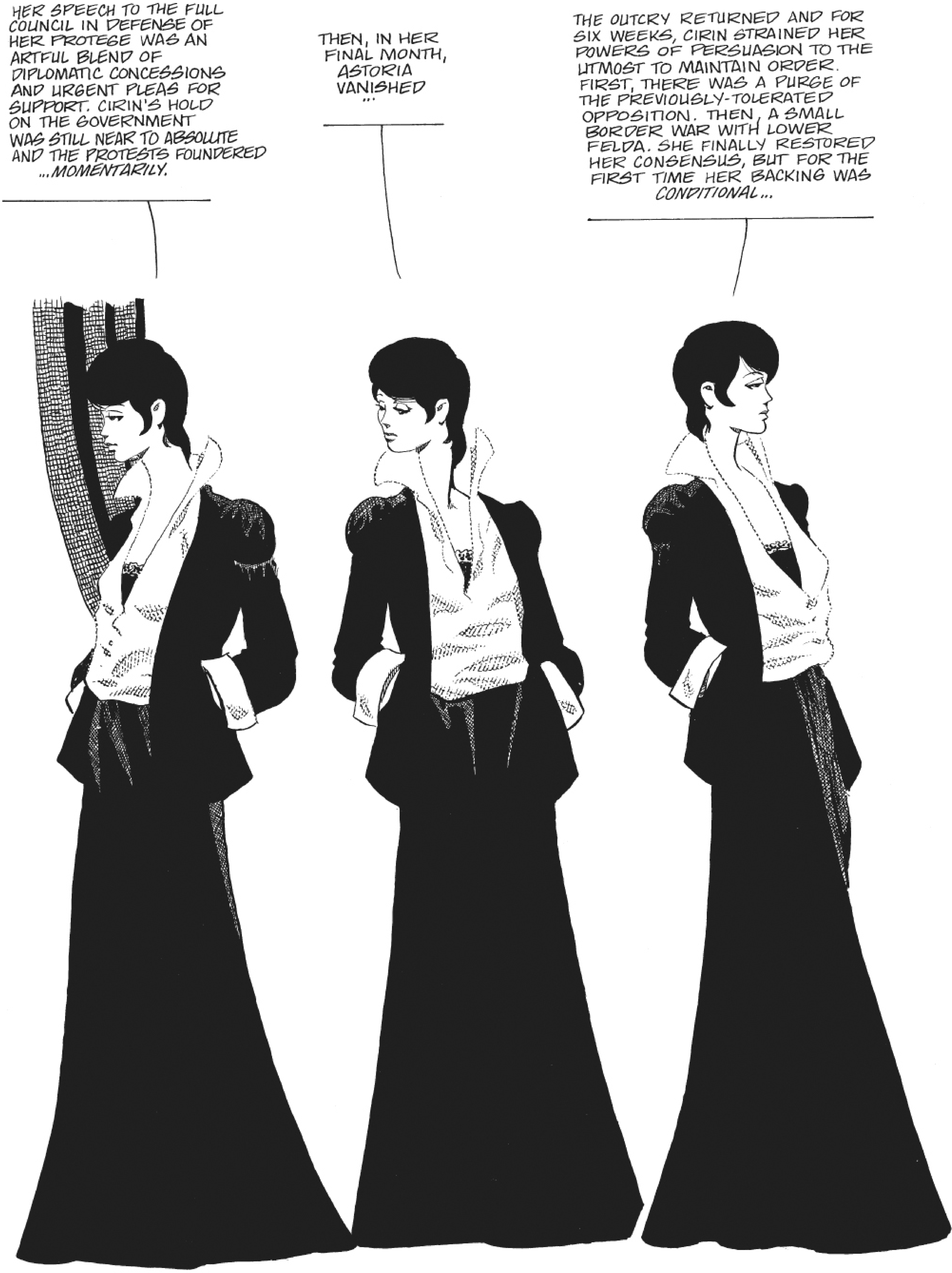


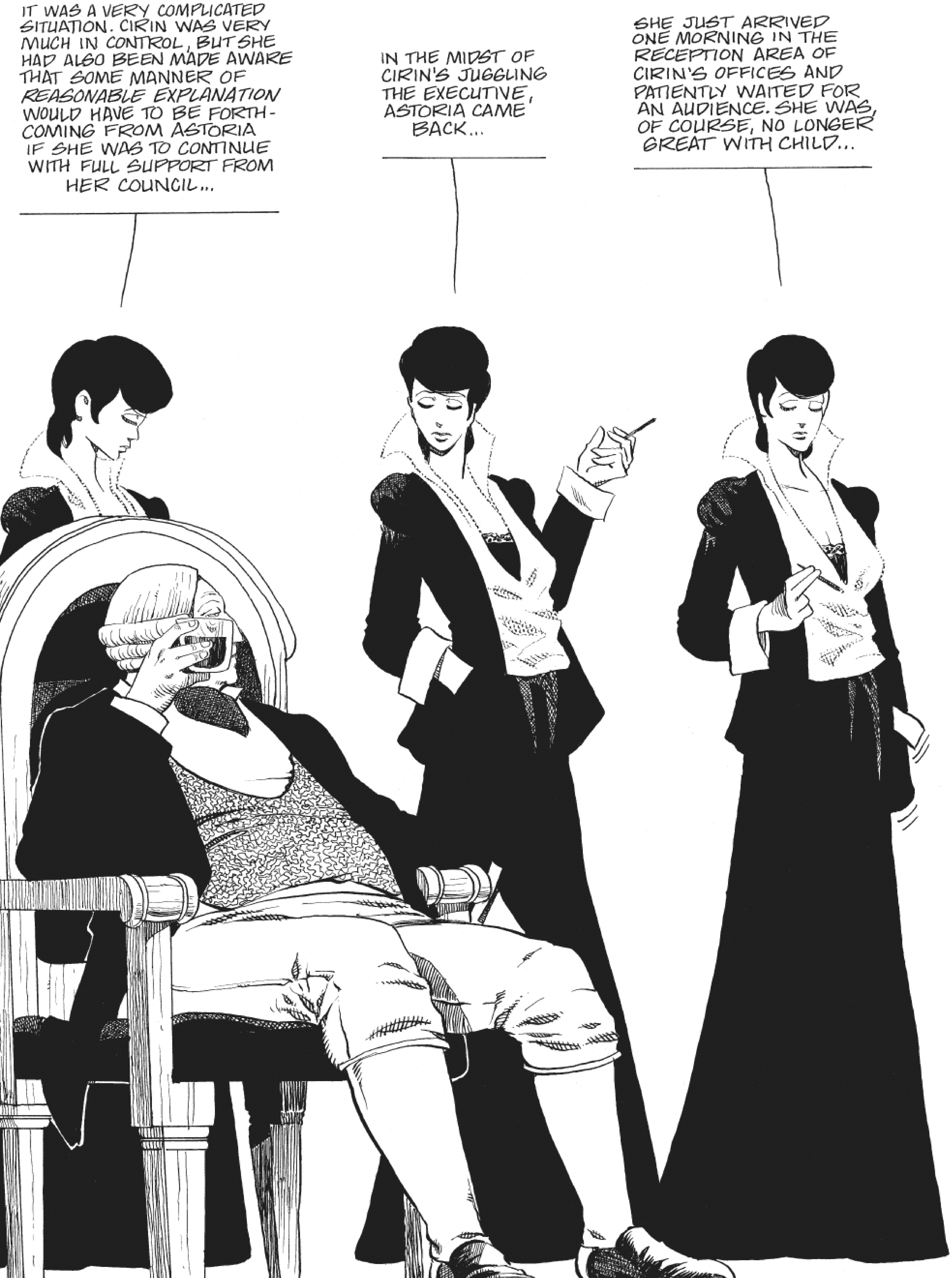
APPOINTMENTS

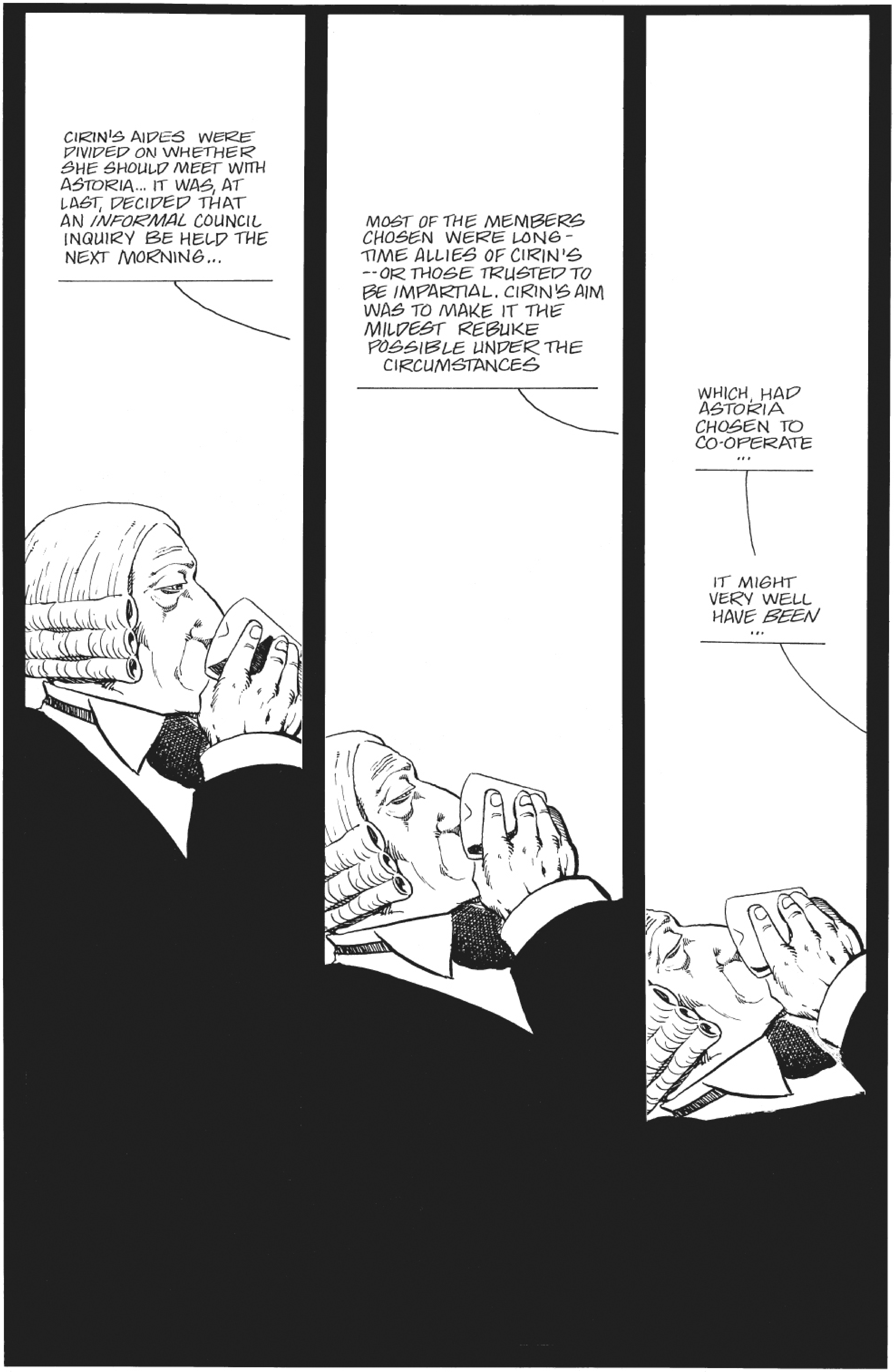

SO THAT WAS THE ENVIRONMENT ASTORIA FOUND HERSELF IN FROM EARLY ADOLESCENCE -- THE CHOSEN SUCCESSOR TO *CIRIN*, IN TRAINING TO LEAD THE NEW MATRIARCHY ONE DAY...
SHE WAS NOT UNMINDFUL OF THOSE WITHIN CIRIN'S GOVERNMENT WHO OPPOSED THE DECISION

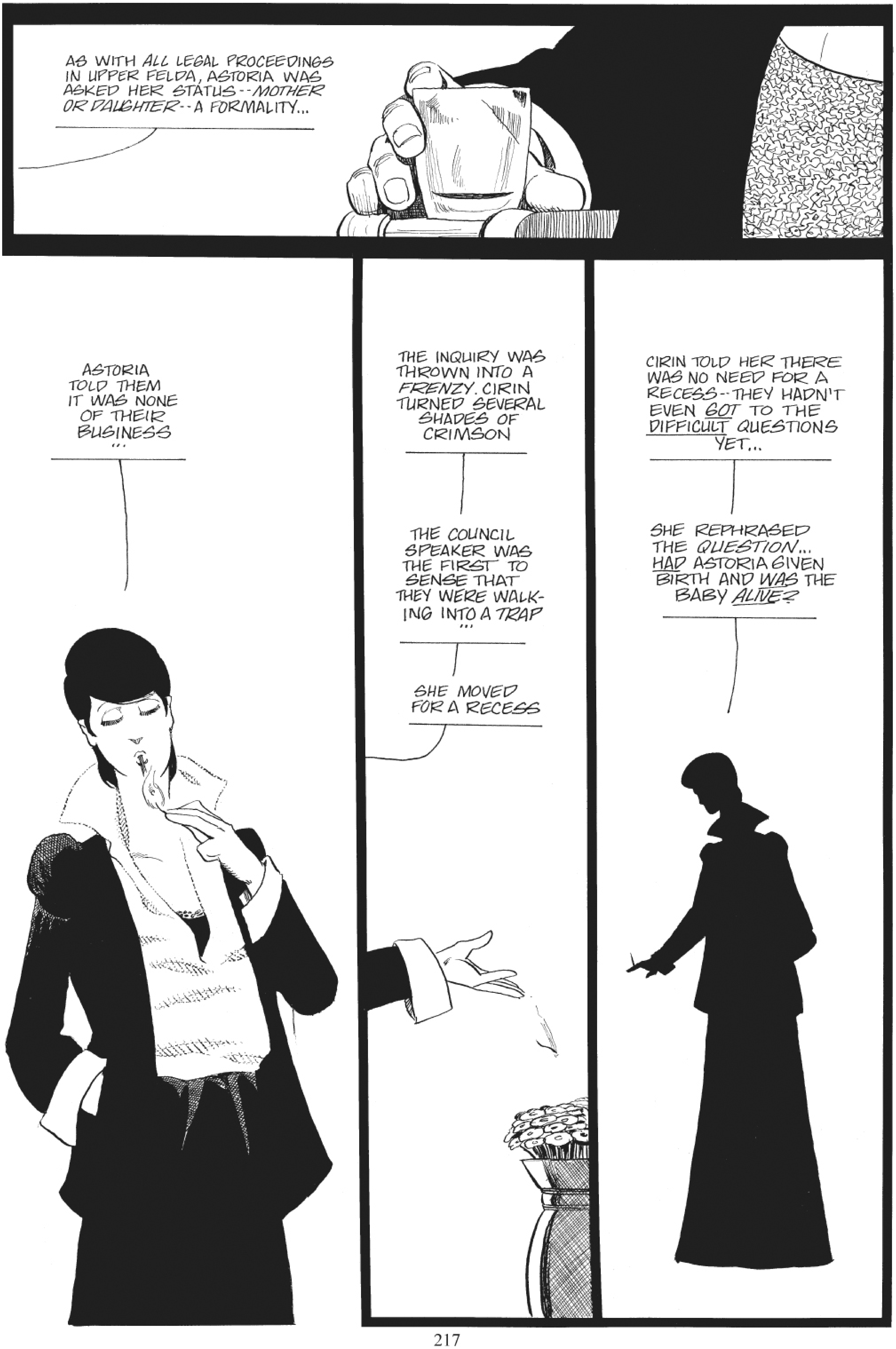

SHE WAS *CHILDLESS*, YOU SEE. CIRIN SAW HER AS THE EMBODIMENT OF THE *NEW MATRIARCHY* AND FELT THAT THE BIRTH THAT WOULD MAKE ASTORIA A FULL CITIZEN HAD TO BE SPECIAL... HAD TO BE PLANNED. THE FATHER... THE HOUR OF CONCEPTION. EVERYTHING...
HER ADVISORS WARNED HER THAT ASTORIA WAS TOO *INDEPENDENT*... SHE ATTRIBUTED THIS TO *JEALOUSY* WHICH WAS ONLY *PARTLY* TRUE ...
IN FACT, BY HER SELECTION, CIRIN HAD PLACED ASTORIA IN A SITUATION THAT WAS UNTENABLE *POLITICALLY*. CIRIN TOLD HER *EVERYTHING* AND ENCOURAGED HER TO PARTICIPATE IN THE SETTING OF POLICY AND THE FRAMING OF THE COUNCIL DEBATES...
THE REST OF THE GOVERNMENT WAS A LOCKED ROOM FOR ASTORIA, *HOWEVER*. AND SHE WAS *SOPHISTICATED* ENOUGH TO SEE THE WRITING ON THE WALL, THOUGH SHE WAS STILL IN HER TEENS...

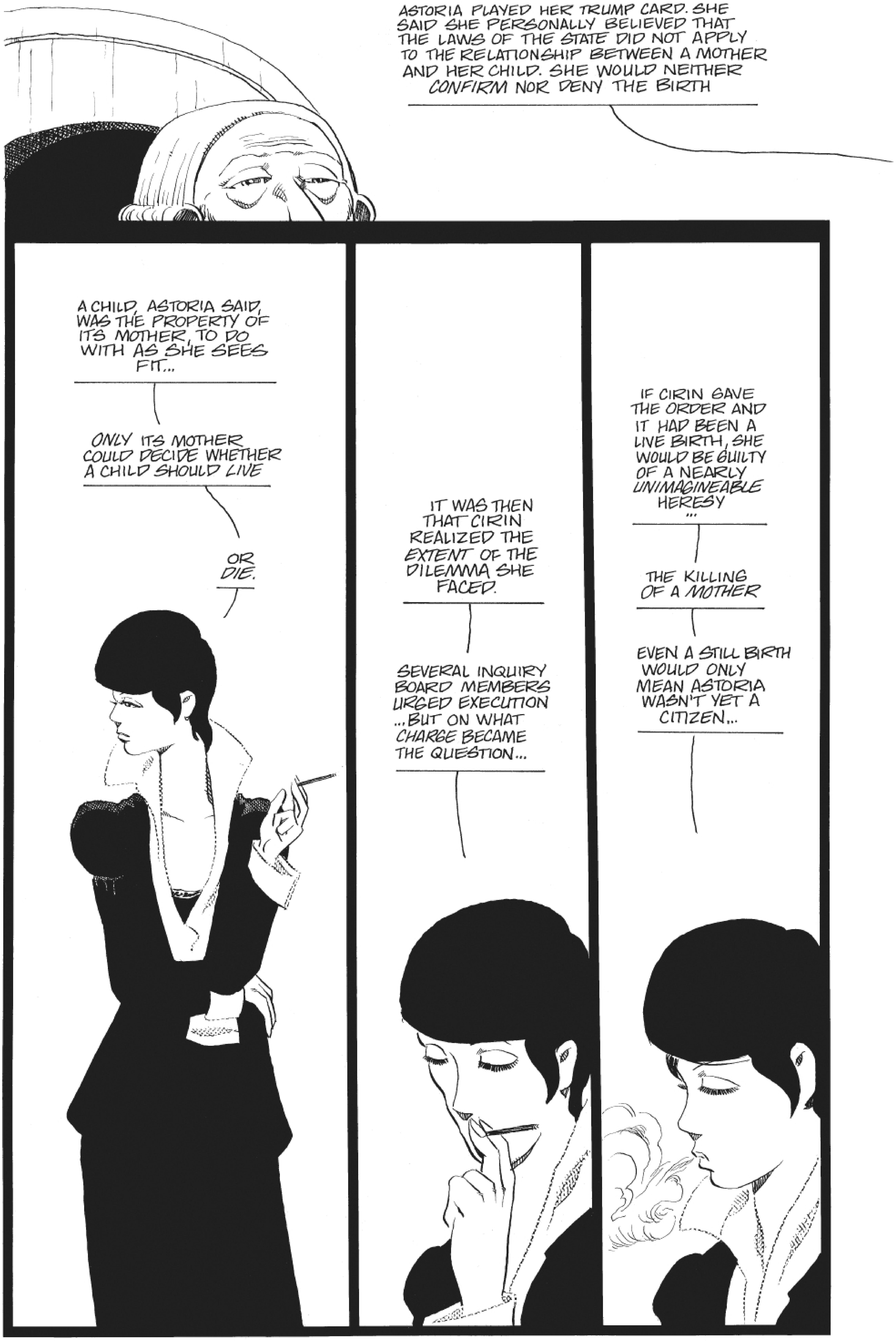

CIRIN COULD *ORDER* HER FOLLOWERS TO ACCEPT ASTORIA BUT LIKE *ANY* BUREAUCRACY, THEY COULD MAKE ASTORIA'S LIFE *HELL*, WHILE STILL PRESENTING A *FACADE* OF COOPERATION
SO, SEVERAL WEEKS BEFORE SHE WAS TO MARRY CIRIN'S ADOPTED SON, *SIR GERRIK*, IN A LAVISH STATE CEREMONY, ASTORIA MARRIED HIM IN *PRIVATE*, AND WAS, IN A MATTER OF A FEW DAYS -- IN A *FAMILY WAY*.
SOMETHING WHICH, ACCORDING TO CIRIN'S TIMETABLE, WAS NOT TO OCCUR FOR AT *LEAST* THREE MORE YEARS.
WHEN THE COUNCIL TRIED TO MAKE AN ISSUE OF IT, CIRIN EXCUSED IT AS A DIFFERENCE IN PHILOSOPHY -- SHE SUGGESTED THAT ASTORIA'S REBELLION WAS AGAINST THE RIGIDITY OF CEREMONY AND THE TRADITIONS OF *FORM*...
SHE MAINTAINED THAT ASTORIA WAS *STEADFAST* IN HER SUPPORT OF THE NEW MATRIARCHY...

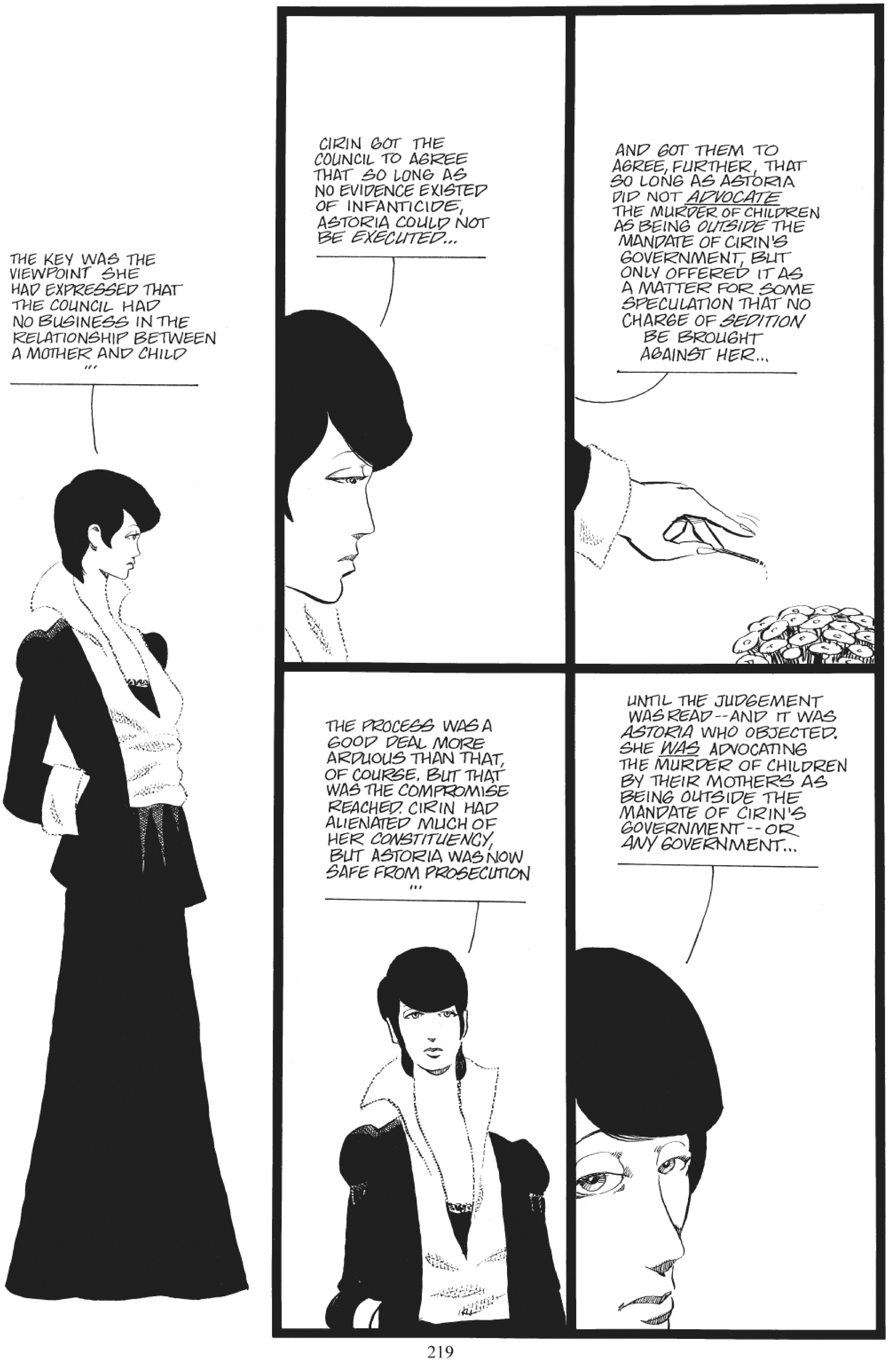

HER SPEECH TO THE FULL COUNCIL IN DEFENSE OF HER PROTEGE WAS AN ARTFUL BLEND OF DIPLOMATIC CONCESSIONS AND URGENT PLEAS FOR SUPPORT. CIRIN'S HOLD ON THE GOVERNMENT WAS STILL NEAR TO ABSOLUTE AND THE PROTESTS FOUNDERED ...*MOMENTARILY.*
THEN, IN HER FINAL MONTH, ASTORIA VANISHED ...
THE OUTCRY RETURNED AND FOR SIX WEEKS, CIRIN STRAINED HER POWERS OF PERSUASION TO THE UTMOST TO MAINTAIN ORDER. FIRST, THERE WAS A PURGE OF THE PREVIOUSLY-TOLERATED OPPOSITION. THEN, A SMALL BORDER WAR WITH LOWER FELDA. SHE FINALLY RESTORED HER CONSENSUS, BUT FOR THE FIRST TIME HER BACKING WAS *CONDITIONAL*...

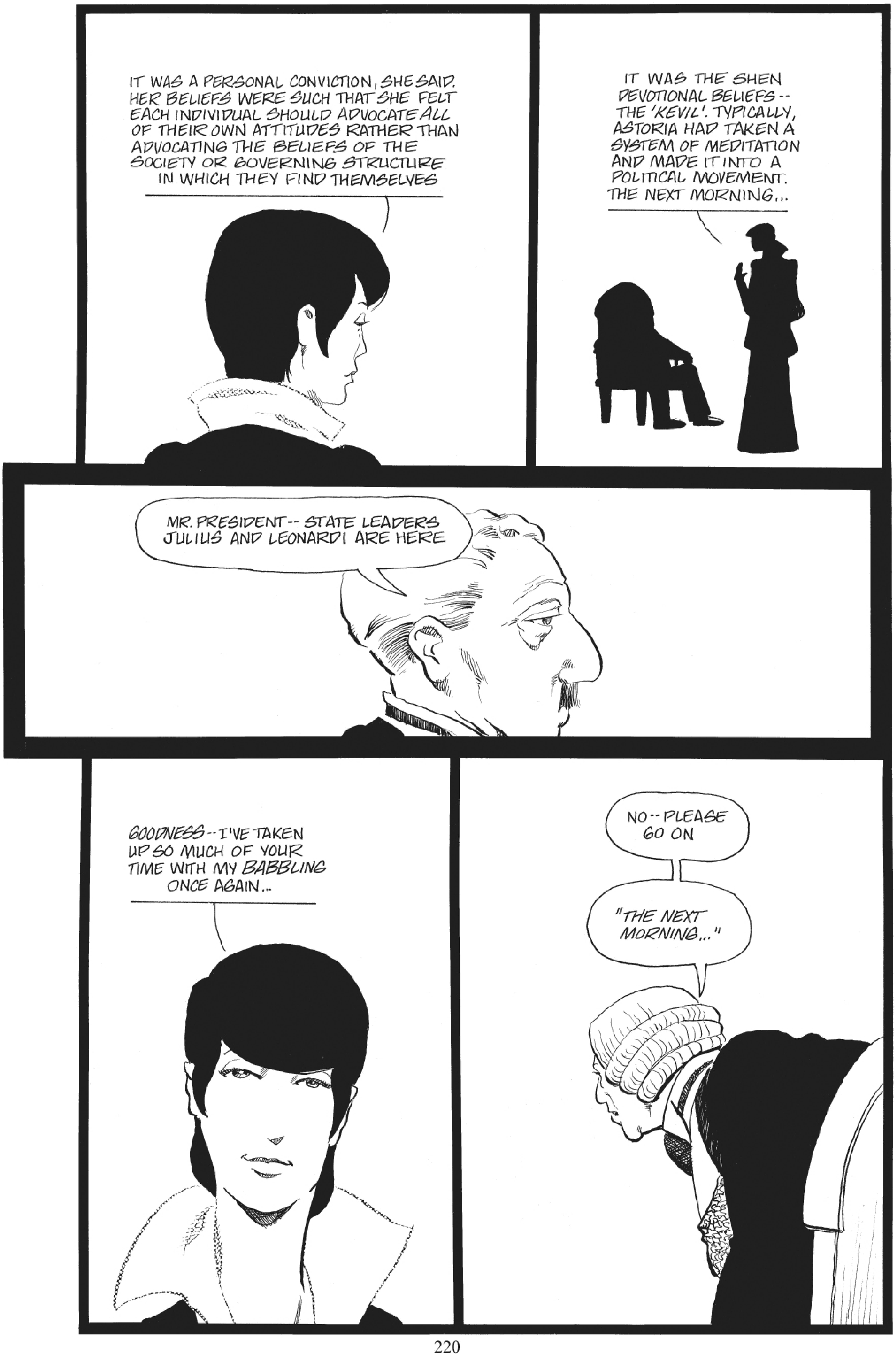

IT WAS A VERY COMPLICATED SITUATION. CIRIN WAS VERY MUCH IN CONTROL, BUT SHE HAD ALSO BEEN MADE AWARE THAT SOME MANNER OF *REASONABLE EXPLANATION* WOULD HAVE TO BE FORTHCOMING FROM ASTORIA IF SHE WAS TO CONTINUE WITH FULL SUPPORT FROM HER COUNCIL...
IN THE MIDST OF CIRIN'S JUGGLING THE EXECUTIVE, ASTORIA CAME BACK...
SHE JUST ARRIVED ONE MORNING IN THE RECEPTION AREA OF CIRIN'S OFFICES AND PATIENTLY WAITED FOR AN AUDIENCE. SHE WAS, OF COURSE, NO LONGER GREAT WITH CHILD...

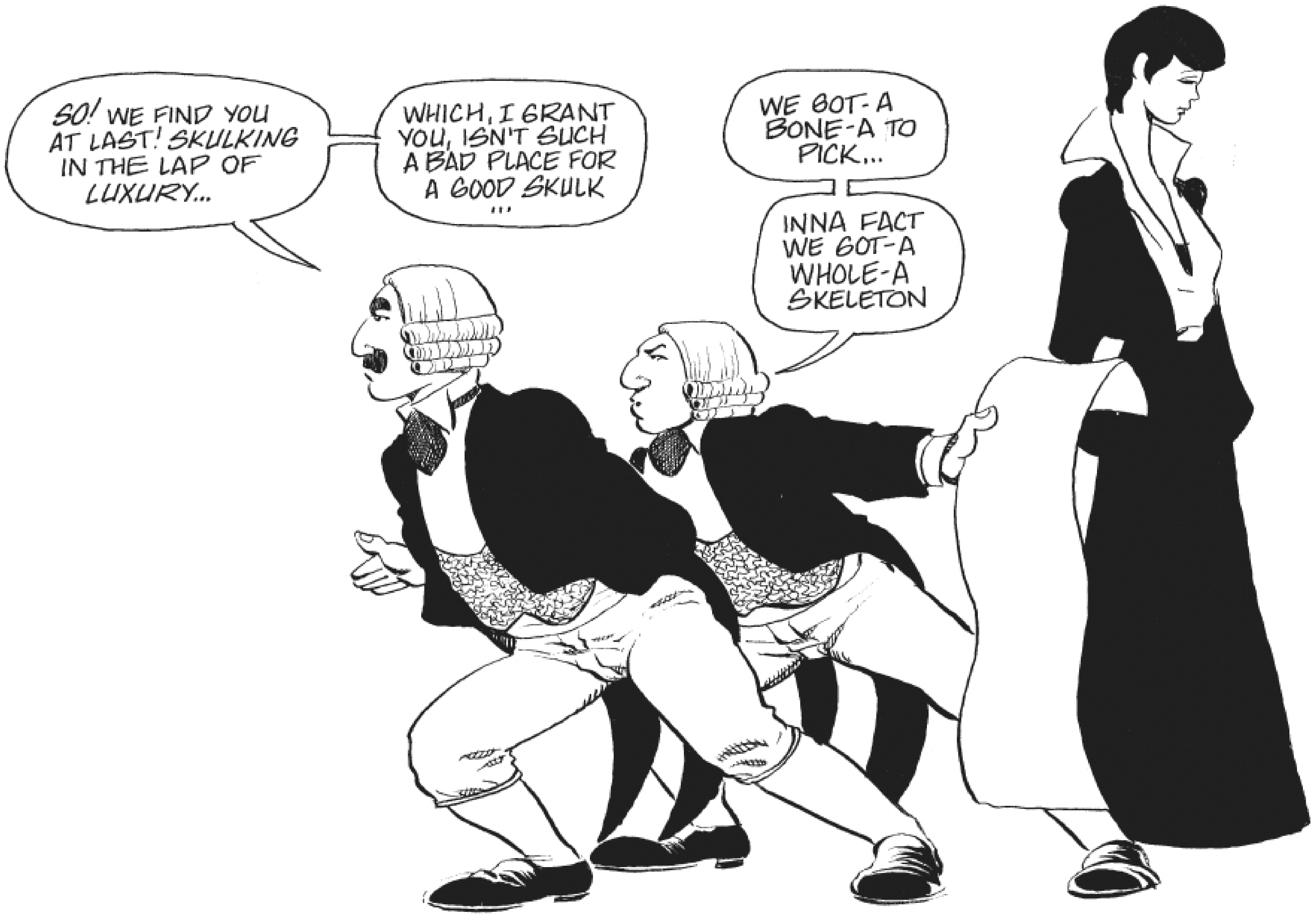

CIRIN'S AIDES WERE DIVIDED ON WHETHER SHE SHOULD MEET WITH ASTORIA... IT WAS, AT LAST, DECIDED THAT AN *INFORMAL* COUNCIL INQUIRY BE HELD THE NEXT MORNING...
MOST OF THE MEMBERS CHOSEN WERE LONG-TIME ALLIES OF CIRIN'S --OR THOSE TRUSTED TO BE IMPARTIAL. CIRIN'S AIM WAS TO MAKE IT THE MILDEST REBUKE POSSIBLE UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES
WHICH, HAD ASTORIA CHOSEN TO CO-OPERATE ...
IT MIGHT VERY WELL HAVE *BEEN* ...

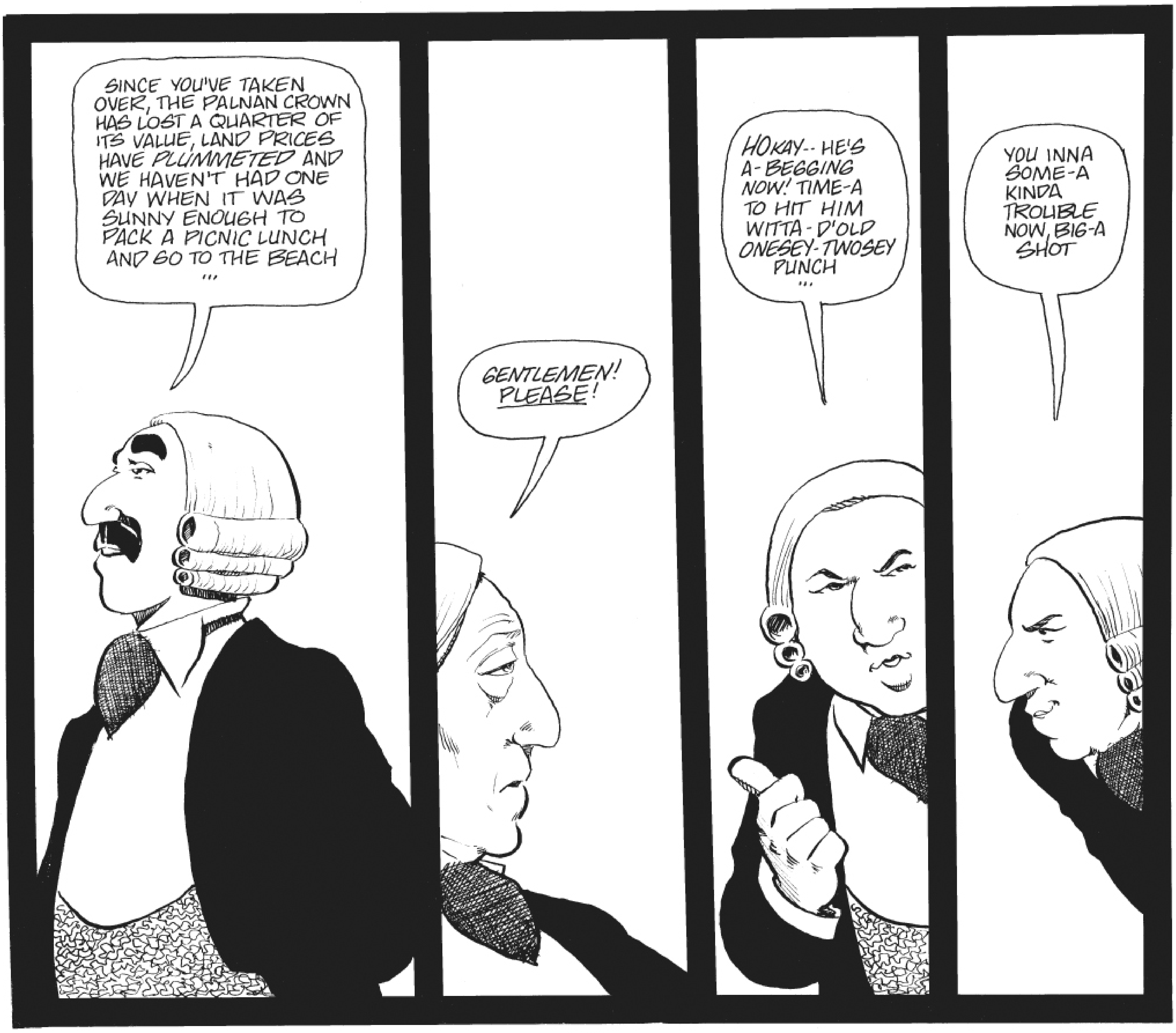

AS WITH *ALL* LEGAL PROCEEDINGS IN UPPER FELDA, ASTORIA WAS ASKED HER STATUS--*MOTHER OR DAUGHTER*--A FORMALITY...
ASTORIA TOLD THEM IT WAS NONE OF THEIR BUSINESS...
THE INQUIRY WAS THROWN INTO A *FRENZY*. CIRIN TURNED SEVERAL SHADES OF CRIMSON
THE COUNCIL SPEAKER WAS THE FIRST TO SENSE THAT THEY WERE WALKING INTO A *TRAP*...
SHE MOVED FOR A RECESS
CIRIN TOLD HER THERE WAS NO NEED FOR A RECESS--THEY HADN'T EVEN GOT TO THE DIFFICULT QUESTIONS YET...
SHE REPHRASED THE *QUESTION*... HAD ASTORIA GIVEN BIRTH AND WAS THE BABY *ALIVE*?

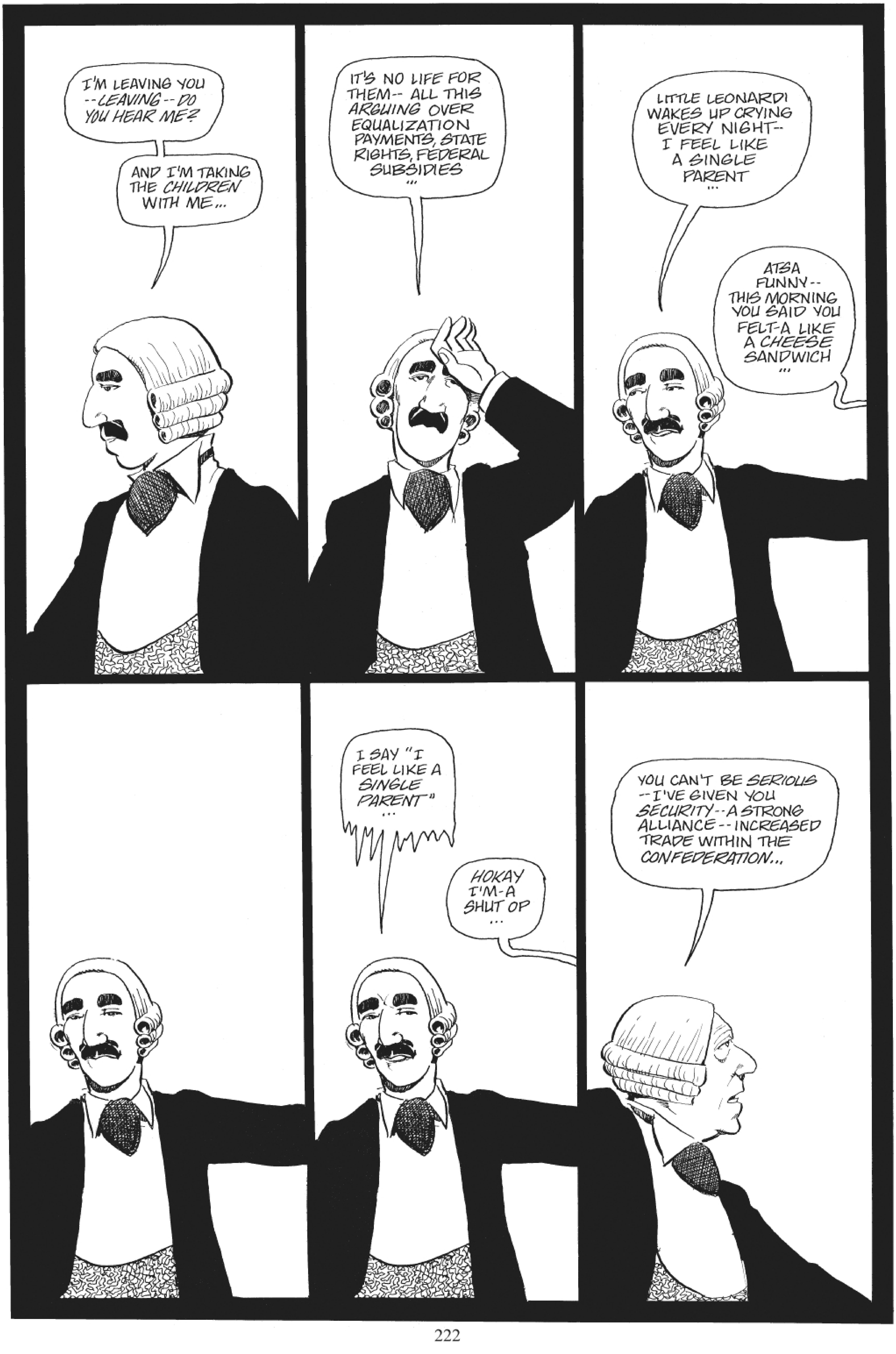

ASTORIA PLAYED HER TRUMP CARD. SHE SAID SHE PERSONALLY BELIEVED THAT THE LAWS OF THE STATE DID NOT APPLY TO THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN A MOTHER AND HER CHILD. SHE WOULD NEITHER CONFIRM NOR DENY THE BIRTH
A CHILD, ASTORIA SAID, WAS THE PROPERTY OF ITS MOTHER, TO DO WITH AS SHE SEES FIT...
ONLY ITS MOTHER COULD DECIDE WHETHER A CHILD SHOULD LIVE
OR DIE.
IT WAS THEN THAT CIRIN REALIZED THE EXTENT OF THE DILEMMA SHE FACED.
SEVERAL INQUIRY BOARD MEMBERS URGED EXECUTION ...BUT ON WHAT CHARGE BECAME THE QUESTION...
IF CIRIN GAVE THE ORDER AND IT HAD BEEN A LIVE BIRTH, SHE WOULD BE GUILTY OF A NEARLY UNIMAGINEABLE HERESY ...
THE KILLING OF A MOTHER
EVEN A STILL BIRTH WOULD ONLY MEAN ASTORIA WASN'T YET A CITIZEN...

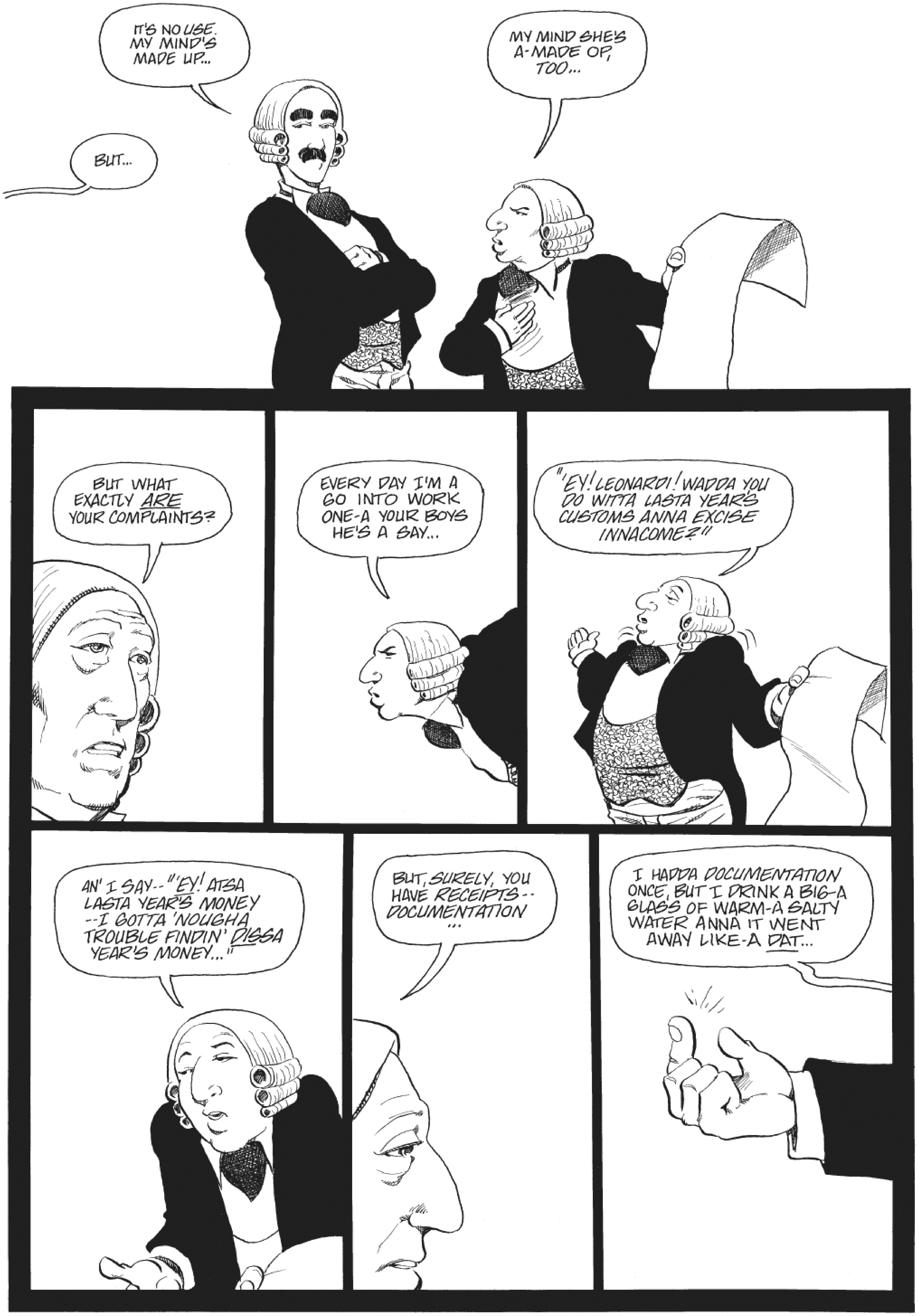

THE KEY WAS THE VIEWPOINT SHE HAD EXPRESSED THAT THE COUNCIL HAD NO BUSINESS IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN A MOTHER AND CHILD ...
CIRIN GOT THE COUNCIL TO AGREE THAT SO LONG AS NO EVIDENCE EXISTED OF INFANTICIDE, ASTORIA COULD NOT BE EXECUTED...
AND GOT THEM TO AGREE, FURTHER, THAT SO LONG AS ASTORIA DID NOT ADVOCATE THE MURDER OF CHILDREN AS BEING OUTSIDE THE MANDATE OF CIRIN'S GOVERNMENT, BUT ONLY OFFERED IT AS A MATTER FOR SOME SPECULATION THAT NO CHARGE OF SEDITION BE BROUGHT AGAINST HER...
THE PROCESS WAS A GOOD DEAL MORE ARDUOUS THAN THAT, OF COURSE. BUT THAT WAS THE COMPROMISE REACHED. CIRIN HAD ALIENATED MUCH OF HER CONSTITUENCY, BUT ASTORIA WAS NOW SAFE FROM PROSECUTION ...
UNTIL THE JUDGEMENT WAS READ--AND IT WAS ASTORIA WHO OBJECTED. SHE WAS ADVOCATING THE MURDER OF CHILDREN BY THEIR MOTHERS AS BEING OUTSIDE THE MANDATE OF CIRIN'S GOVERNMENT--OR ANY GOVERNMENT...

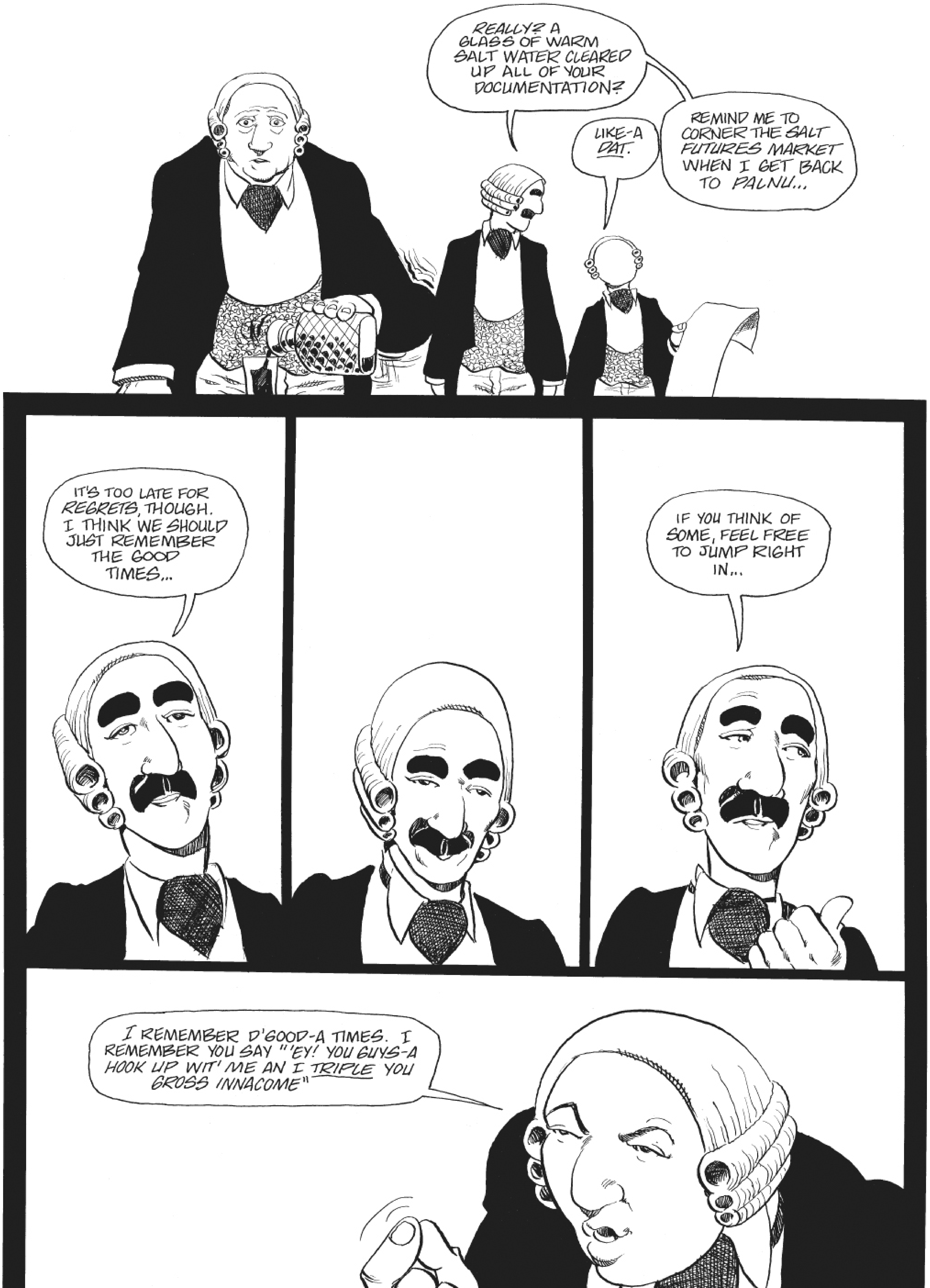

IT WAS A PERSONAL CONVICTION, SHE SAID. HER BELIEFS WERE SUCH THAT SHE FELT EACH INDIVIDUAL SHOULD ADVOCATE *ALL* OF THEIR OWN ATTITUDES RATHER THAN ADVOCATING THE BELIEFS OF THE SOCIETY OR GOVERNING STRUCTURE IN WHICH THEY FIND THEMSELVES
IT WAS THE SHEN DEVOTIONAL BELIEFS -- THE *'KEVIL'*. TYPICALLY, ASTORIA HAD TAKEN A SYSTEM OF MEDITATION AND MADE IT INTO A POLITICAL MOVEMENT. THE NEXT MORNING...
MR. PRESIDENT -- STATE LEADERS JULIUS AND LEONARDI ARE HERE
GOODNESS -- I'VE TAKEN UP SO MUCH OF YOUR TIME WITH MY *BABBLING* ONCE AGAIN...
NO -- PLEASE GO ON
"THE NEXT MORNING..."

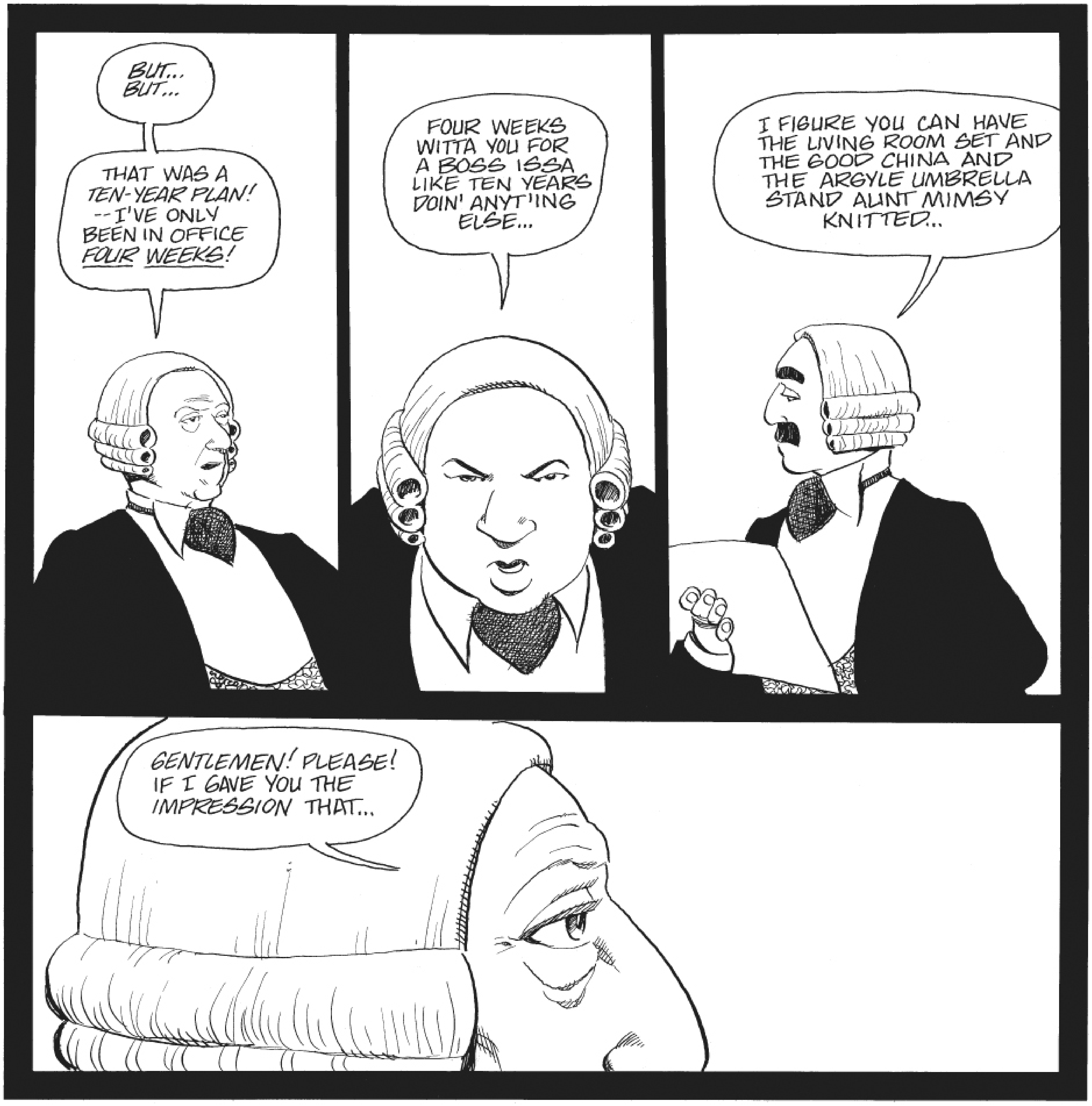

SO! WE FIND YOU AT LAST! SKULKING IN THE LAP OF LUXURY...
WHICH, I GRANT YOU, ISN'T SUCH A BAD PLACE FOR A GOOD SKULK ...
WE GOT-A BONE-A TO PICK...
INNA FACT WE GOT-A WHOLE-A SKELETON

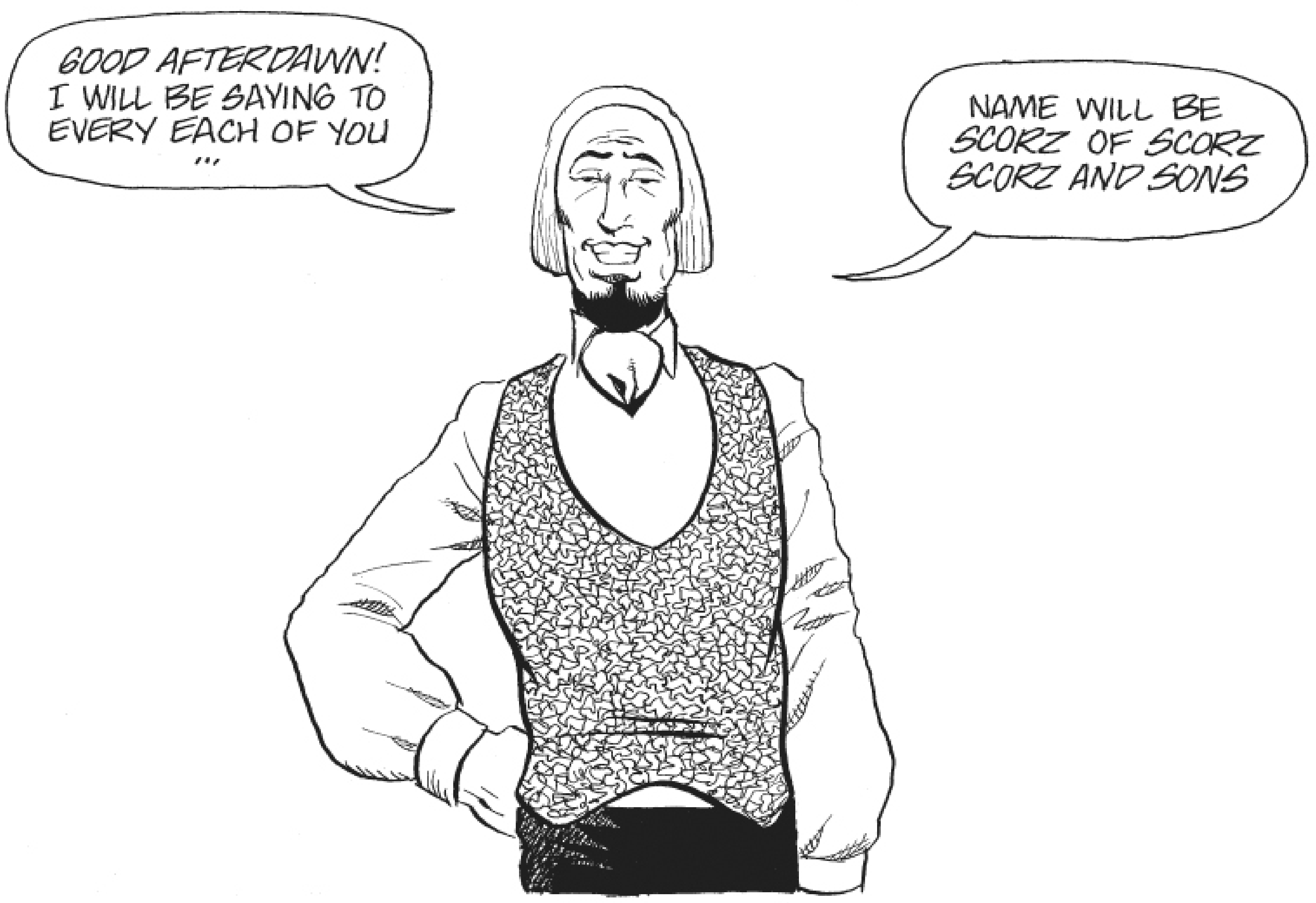

SINCE YOU'VE TAKEN OVER, THE PALNAN CROWN HAS LOST A QUARTER OF ITS VALUE, LAND PRICES HAVE PLUMMETED AND WE HAVEN'T HAD ONE DAY WHEN IT WAS SUNNY ENOUGH TO PACK A PICNIC LUNCH AND GO TO THE BEACH ...
GENTLEMEN! PLEASE!
HOKAY-- HE'S A-BEGGING NOW! TIME-A TO HIT HIM WITTA-D'OLD ONESEY-TWOSEY PUNCH ...
YOU INNA SOME-A KINDA TROUBLE NOW, BIG-A SHOT

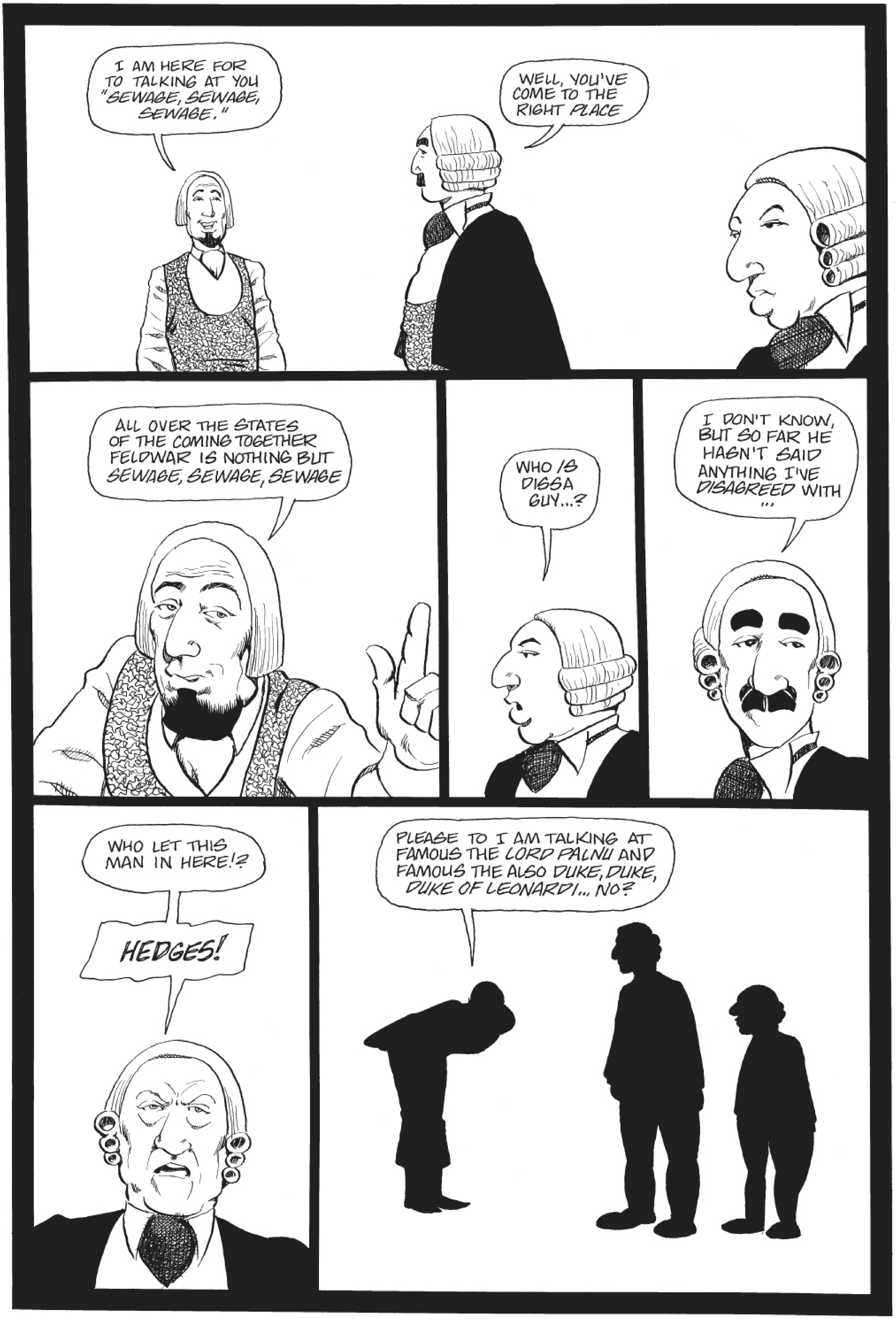

I'M LEAVING YOU --LEAVING--DO YOU HEAR ME?
AND I'M TAKING THE CHILDREN WITH ME...
IT'S NO LIFE FOR THEM-- ALL THIS ARGUING OVER EQUALIZATION PAYMENTS, STATE RIGHTS, FEDERAL SUBSIDIES ...
LITTLE LEONARDI WAKES UP CRYING EVERY NIGHT-- I FEEL LIKE A SINGLE PARENT ...
ATSA FUNNY-- THIS MORNING YOU SAID YOU FELT-A LIKE A CHEESE SANDWICH ...
I SAY "I FEEL LIKE A SINGLE PARENT" ...
HOKAY I'M-A SHUT OP ...
YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS --I'VE GIVEN YOU SECURITY--A STRONG ALLIANCE--INCREASED TRADE WITHIN THE CONFEDERATION...

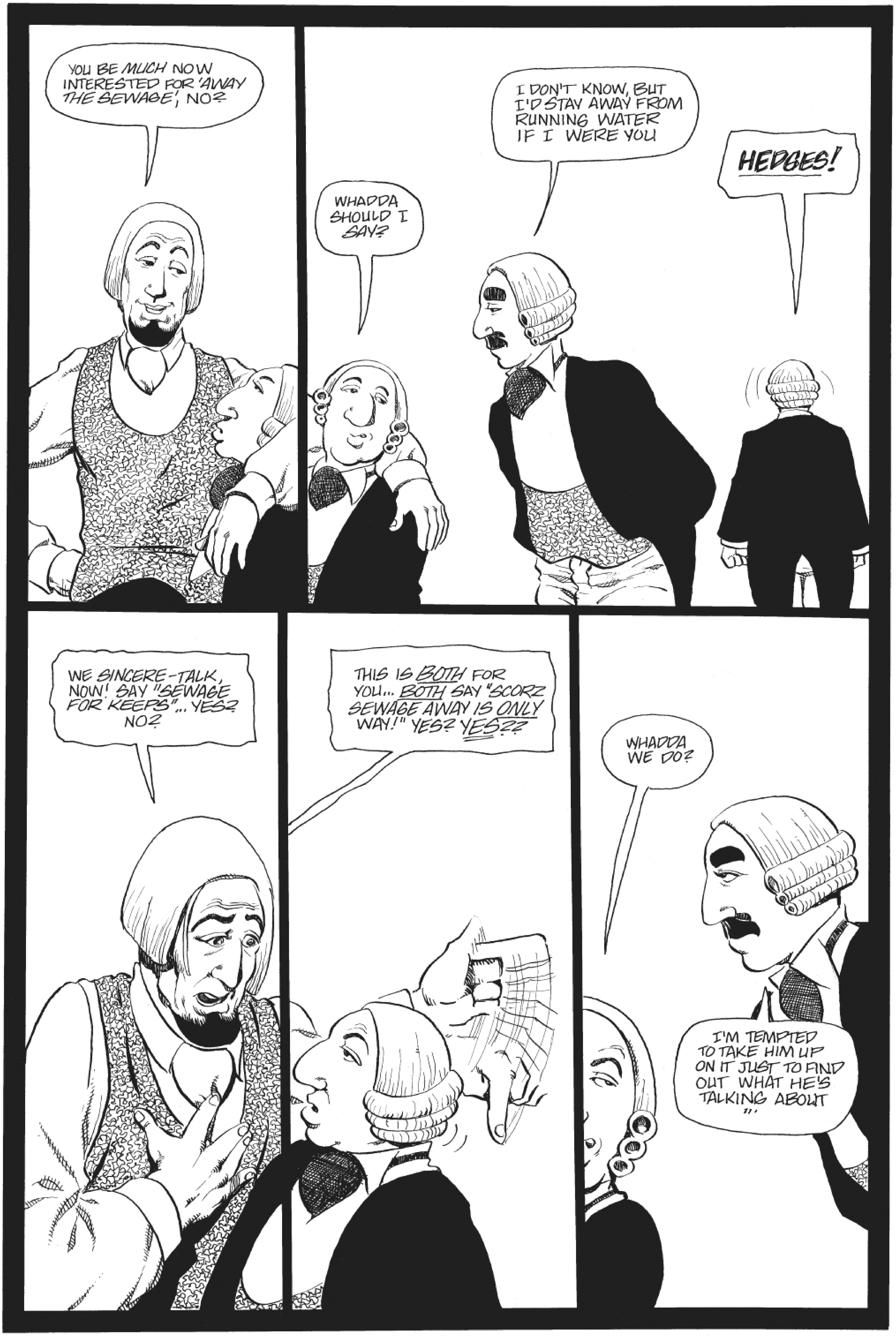

IT'S NO *USE*. MY MIND'S MADE UP...
BUT...
MY MIND SHE'S A-MADE OP, TOO...
BUT WHAT EXACTLY ARE YOUR COMPLAINTS?
EVERY DAY I'M A GO INTO WORK ONE-A YOUR BOYS HE'S A SAY...
"'EY! LEONARDI! WADDA YOU DO WITTA LASTA YEAR'S CUSTOMS ANNA EXCISE INNACOME?"
AN' I SAY--"'EY! ATSA LASTA YEAR'S MONEY --I GOTTA 'NOUGHA TROUBLE FINDIN' DISSA YEAR'S MONEY..."
BUT, *SURELY*, YOU HAVE *RECEIPTS*-- *DOCUMENTATION* ...
I HADDA *DOCUMENTATION* ONCE, BUT I DRINK A BIG-A GLASS OF WARM-A SALTY WATER ANNA IT WENT AWAY LIKE-A DAT...

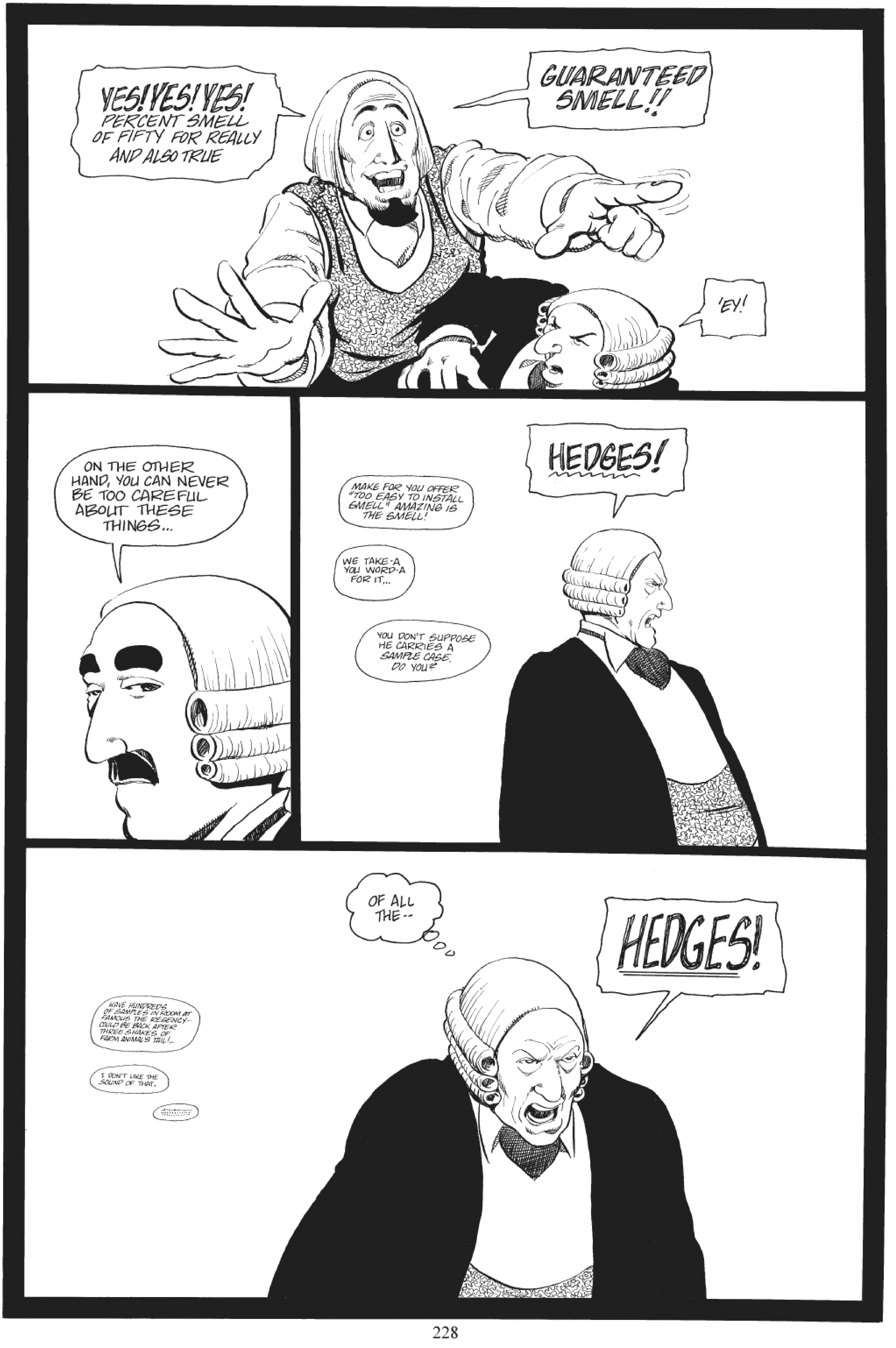

REALLY? A GLASS OF WARM SALT WATER CLEARED UP ALL OF YOUR DOCUMENTATION?
LIKE-A DAT.
REMIND ME TO CORNER THE SALT FUTURES MARKET WHEN I GET BACK TO PALNU...
IT'S TOO LATE FOR REGRETS, THOUGH. I THINK WE SHOULD JUST REMEMBER THE GOOD TIMES...
IF YOU THINK OF SOME, FEEL FREE TO JUMP RIGHT IN...
I REMEMBER D'GOOD-A TIMES. I REMEMBER YOU SAY "'EY! YOU GUYS-A HOOK UP WIT' ME AN I TRIPLE YOU GROSS INNACOME"

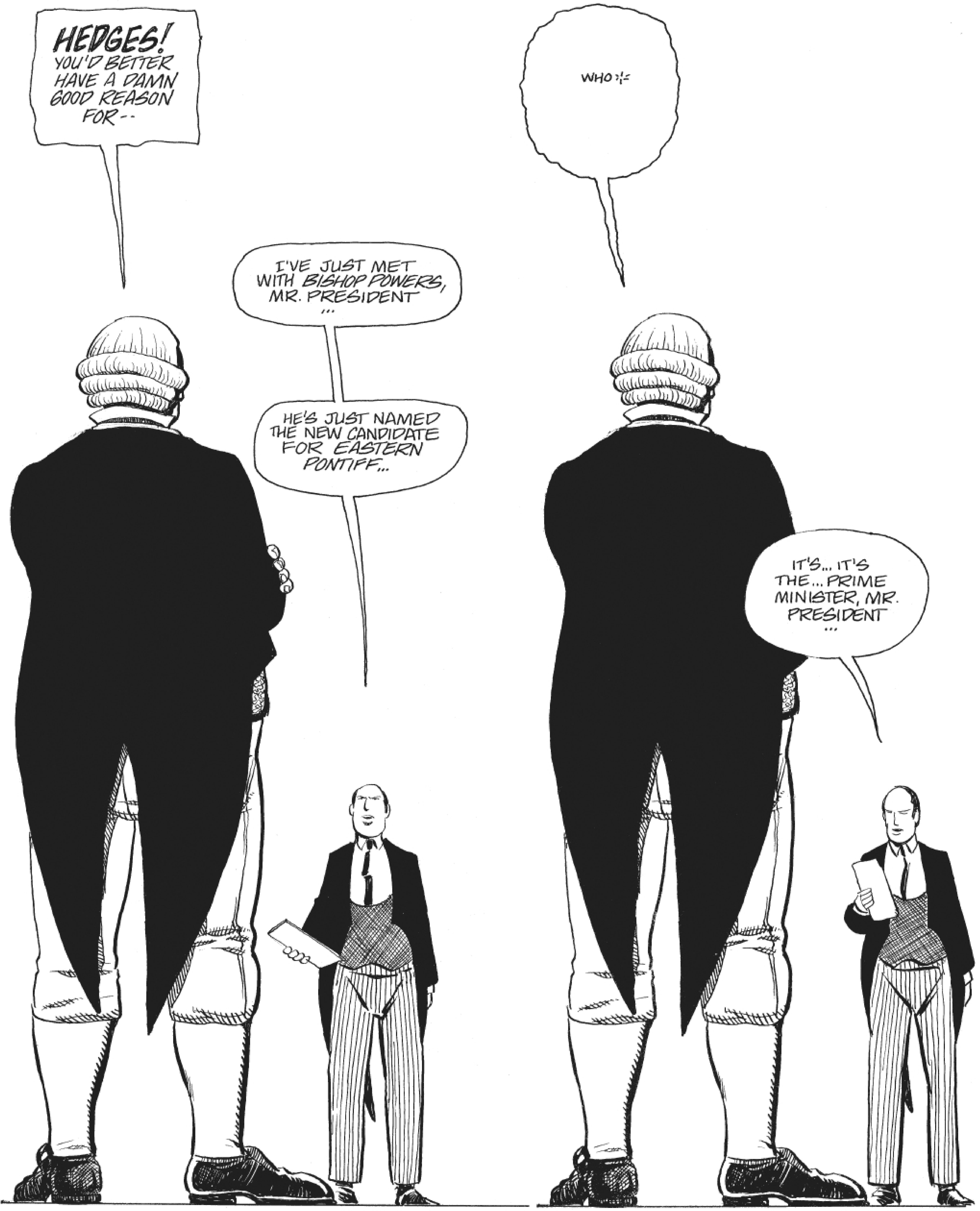

BUT... BUT...
THAT WAS A *TEN-YEAR PLAN!* --I'VE ONLY BEEN IN OFFICE *FOUR WEEKS!*
FOUR WEEKS WITTA YOU FOR A BOSS ISSA LIKE TEN YEARS DOIN' ANYT'ING ELSE...
I FIGURE YOU CAN HAVE THE LIVING ROOM SET AND THE GOOD CHINA AND THE ARGYLE UMBRELLA STAND AUNT MIMSY KNITTED...
GENTLEMEN! PLEASE! IF I GAVE YOU THE IMPRESSION THAT...

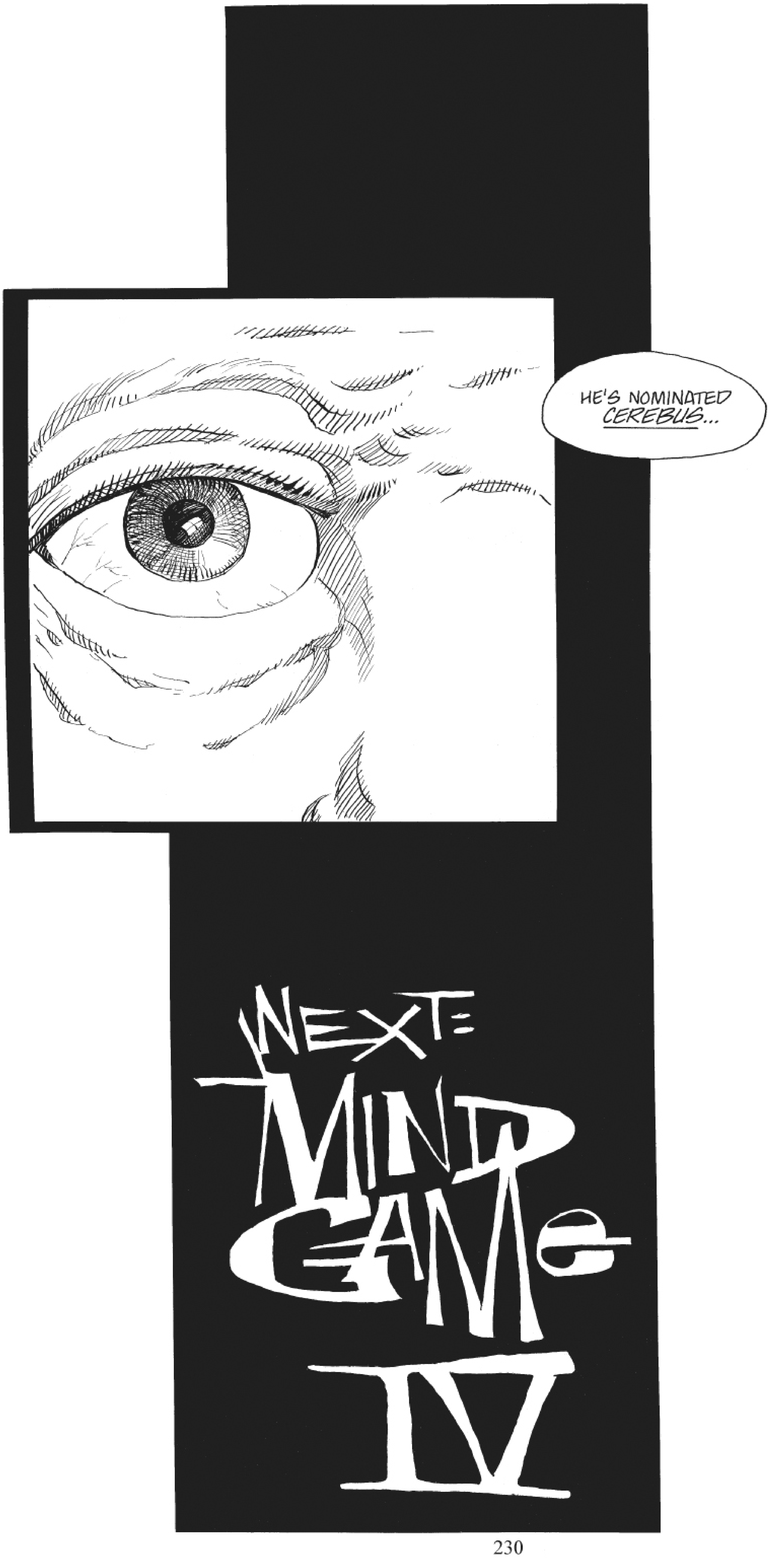

GOOD AFTERDAWN! I WILL BE SAYING TO EVERY EACH OF YOU ...
NAME WILL BE *SCORZ* OF *SCORZ SCORZ AND SONS*


I AM HERE FOR TO TALKING AT YOU "SEWAGE, SEWAGE, SEWAGE."
WELL, YOU'VE COME TO THE RIGHT PLACE
ALL OVER THE STATES OF THE COMING TOGETHER FELDWAR IS NOTHING BUT SEWAGE, SEWAGE, SEWAGE
WHO IS DISSA GUY...?
I DON'T KNOW, BUT SO FAR HE HASN'T SAID ANYTHING I'VE DISAGREED WITH ...
WHO LET THIS MAN IN HERE!?
HEDGES!
PLEASE TO I AM TALKING AT FAMOUS THE LORD PALNU AND FAMOUS THE ALSO DUKE, DUKE, DUKE OF LEONARDI... NO?

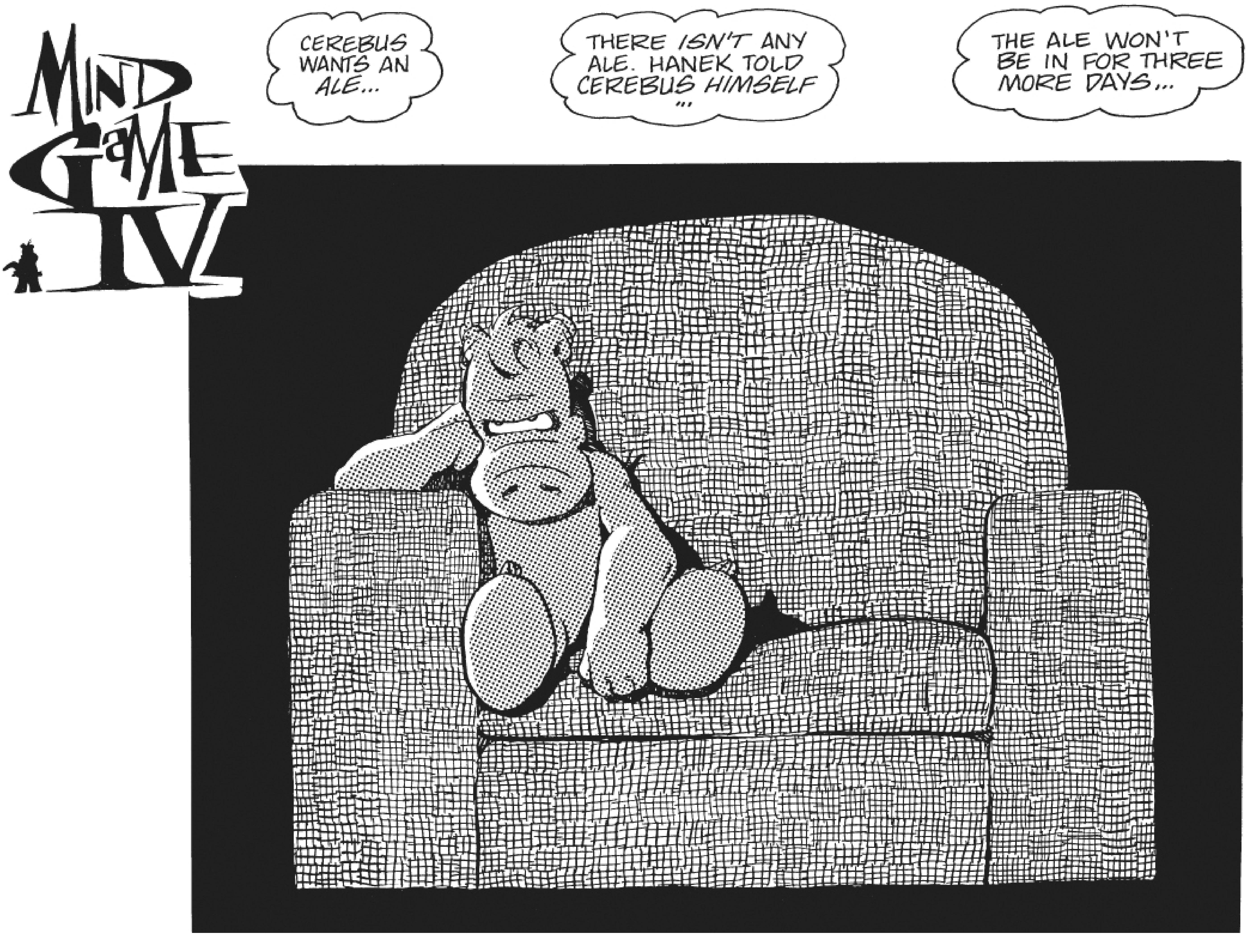

YOU BE *MUCH* NOW INTERESTED FOR 'AWAY *THE SEWAGE*', NO?
WHADDA SHOULD I SAY?
I DON'T KNOW, BUT I'D STAY AWAY FROM RUNNING WATER IF I WERE YOU
HEDGES!
WE *SINCERE-TALK*, NOW! *SAY* "*SEWAGE FOR KEEPS*"... YES? NO?
THIS IS *BOTH* FOR YOU... *BOTH* SAY "*SCORZ SEWAGE AWAY IS ONLY WAY!*" YES? *YES??*
WHADDA WE DO?
I'M TEMPTED TO TAKE HIM UP ON IT JUST TO FIND OUT WHAT HE'S TALKING ABOUT

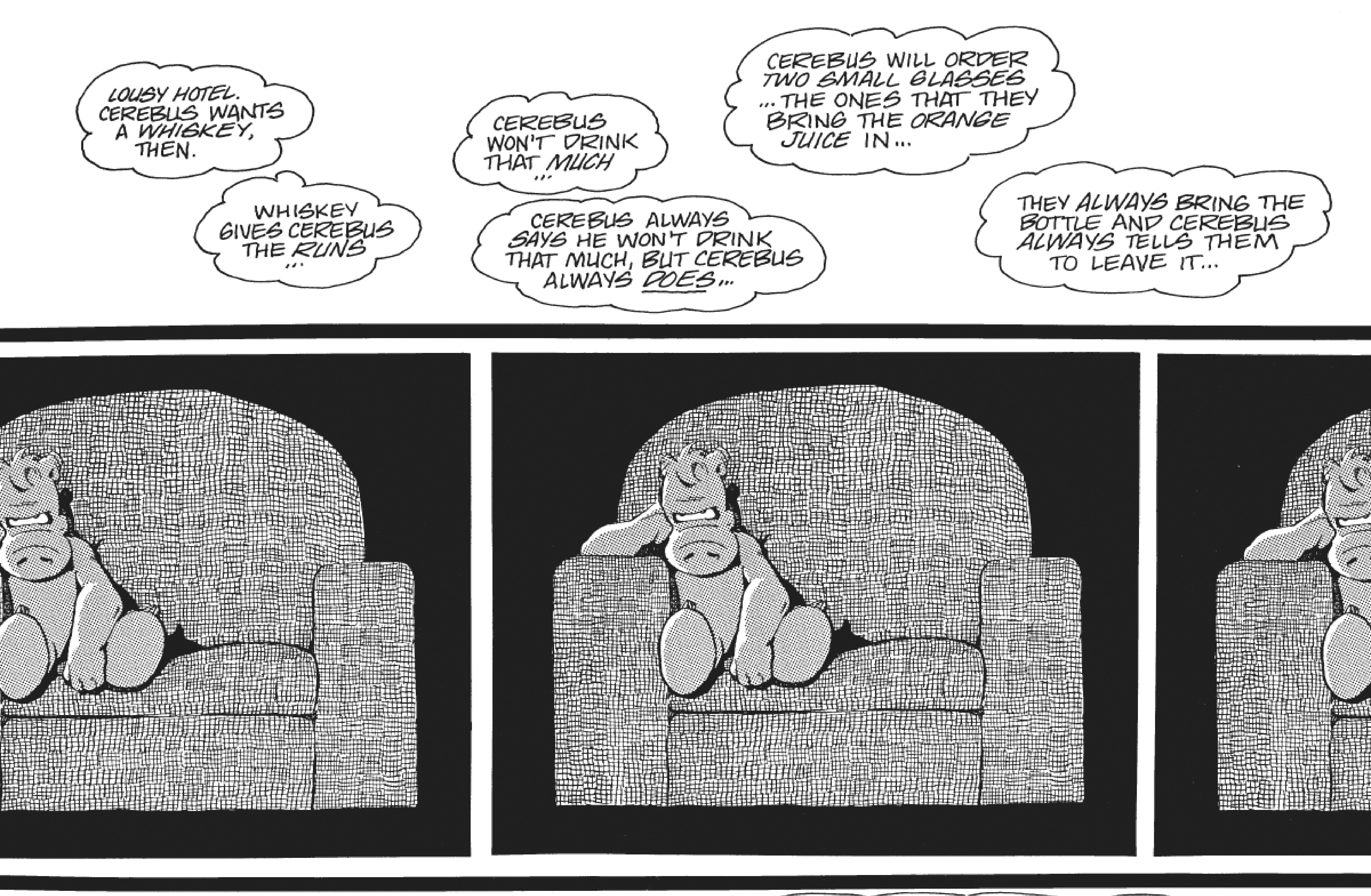

YES! YES! YES! PERCENT SMELL OF FIFTY FOR REALLY AND ALSO TRUE
GUARANTEED SMELL!!
'EY!
ON THE OTHER HAND, YOU CAN NEVER BE TOO CAREFUL ABOUT THESE THINGS...
MAKE FOR YOU OFFER "TOO EASY TO INSTALL SMELL" AMAZING IS THE SMELL!
HEDGES!
WE TAKE-A YOU WORD-A FOR IT...
YOU DON'T SUPPOSE HE CARRIES A SAMPLE CASE, DO YOU?
OF ALL THE--
HEDGES!
HAVE HUNDREDS OF SAMPLES IN ROOM AT FAMOUS THE REGENCY-- COULD BE BACK AFTER THREE SHAKES OF FARM ANIMAL'S TAIL!...
I DON'T LIKE THE SOUND OF THAT.

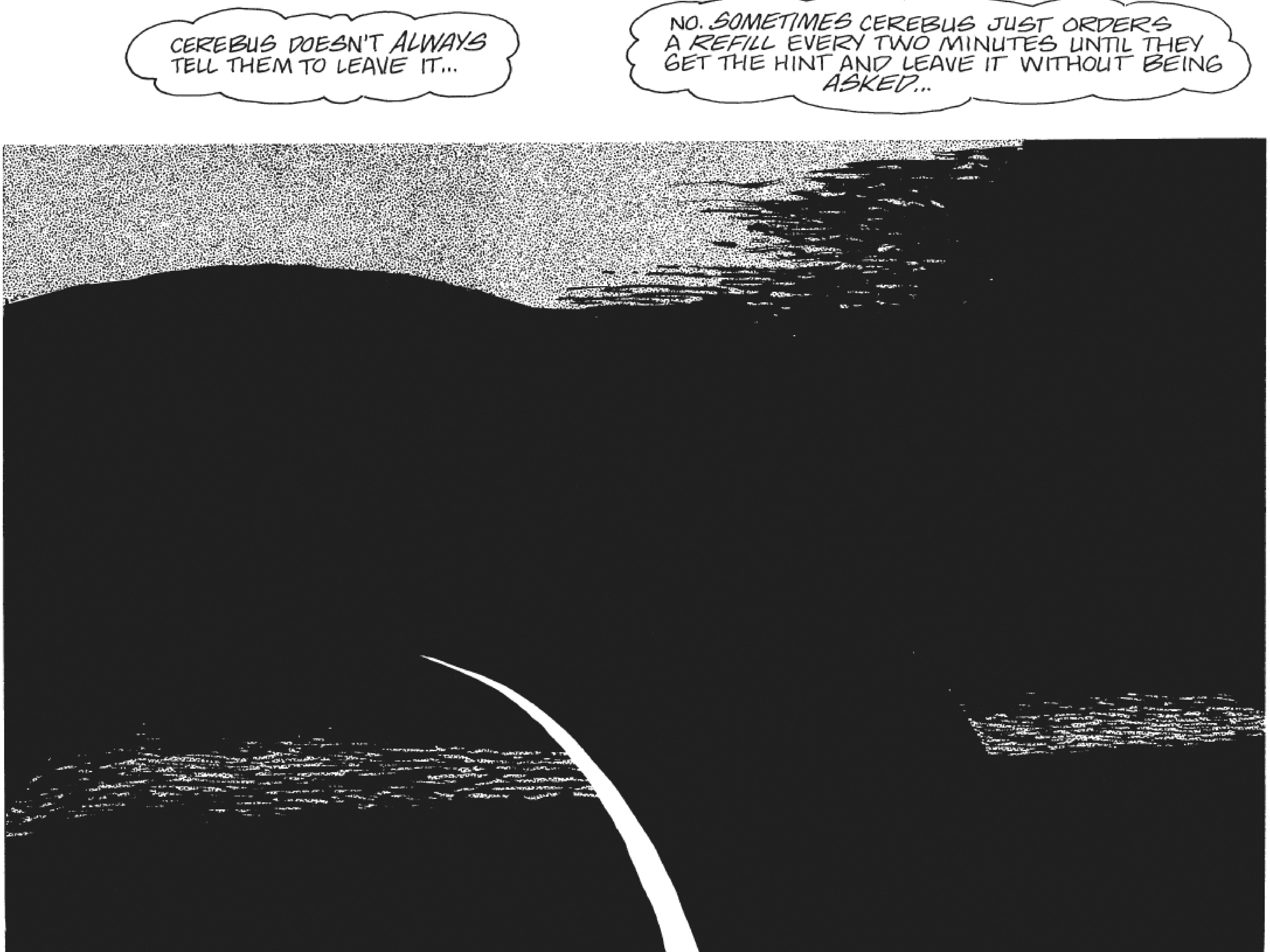

HEDGES! YOU'D BETTER HAVE A DAMN GOOD REASON FOR--
I'VE JUST MET WITH BISHOP POWERS, MR. PRESIDENT ...
HE'S JUST NAMED THE NEW CANDIDATE FOR EASTERN PONTIFF...
WHO?!
IT'S... IT'S THE... PRIME MINISTER, MR. PRESIDENT ...

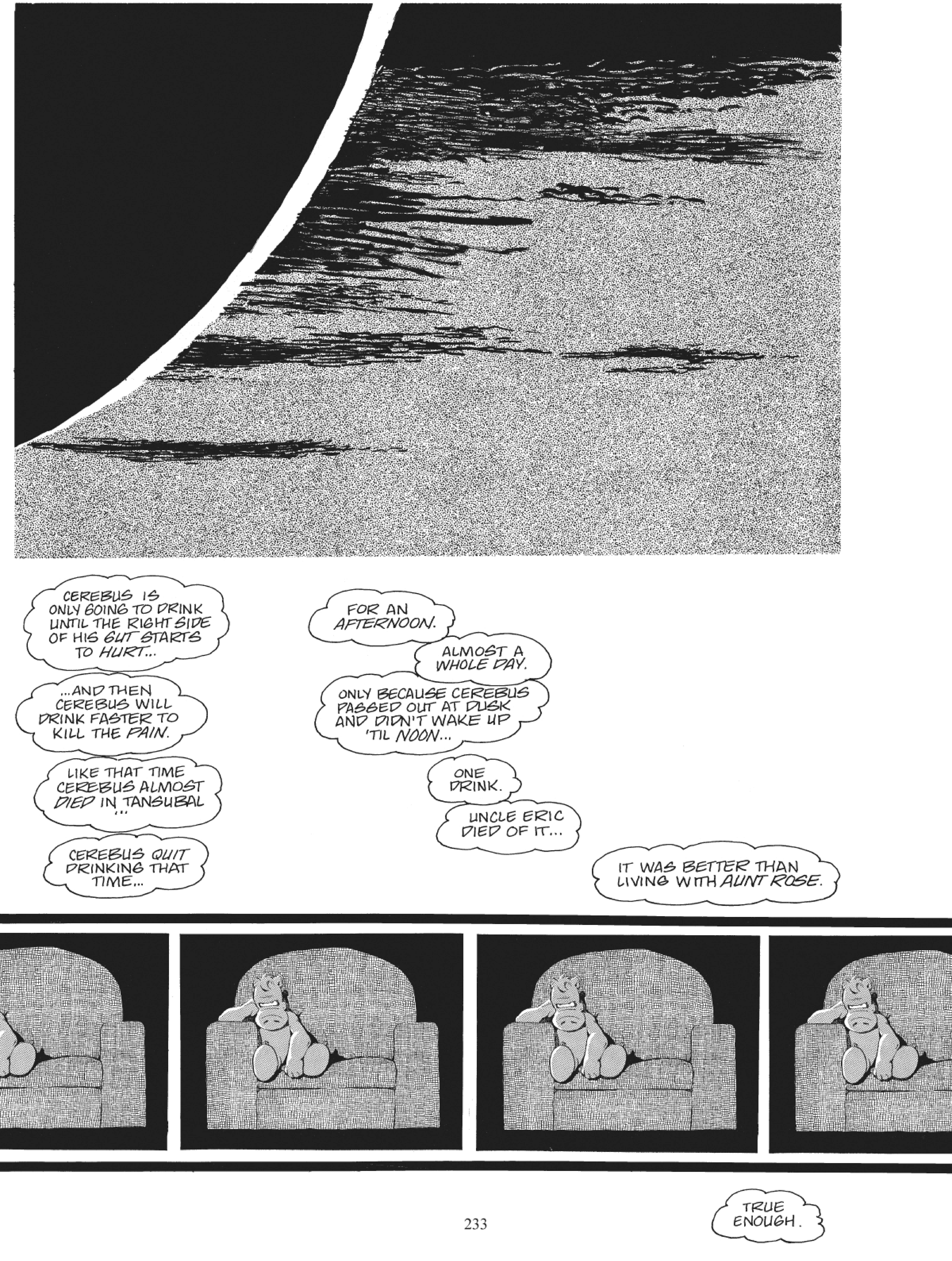

HE'S NOMINATED CEREBUS...
NEXT:
MIND GAME
IV

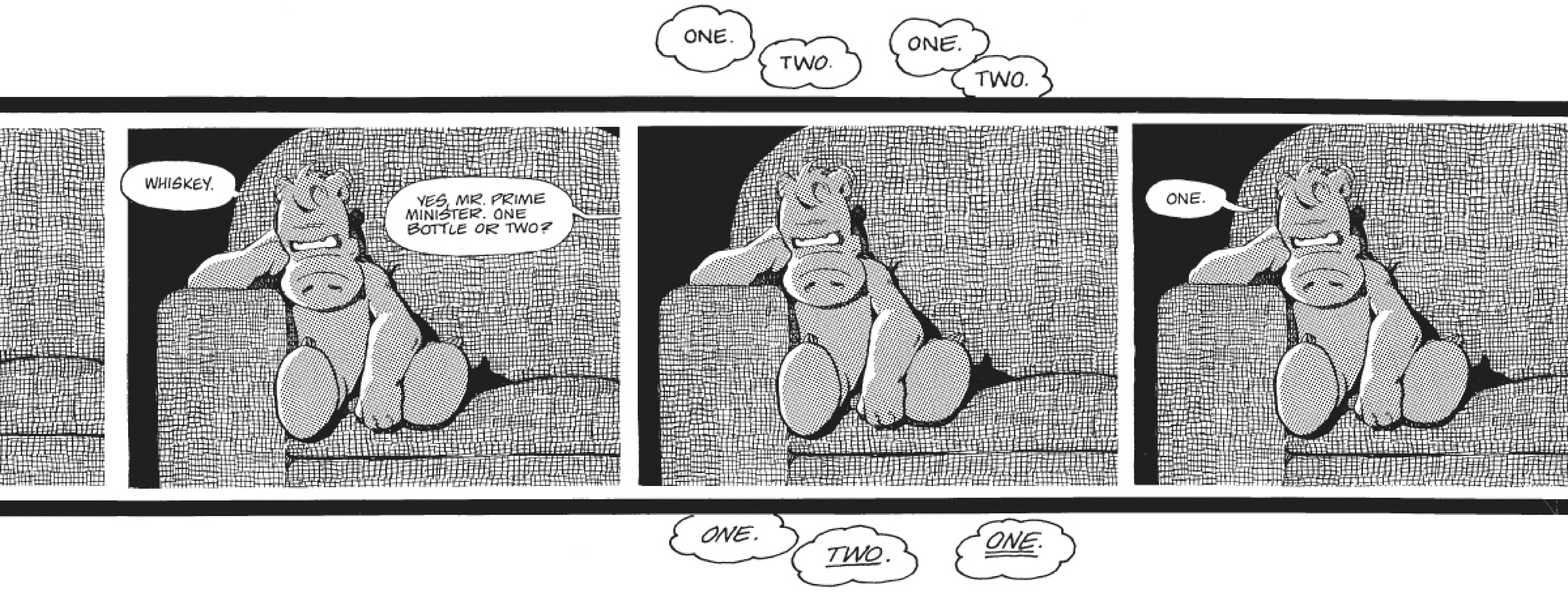
MIND GAME IV

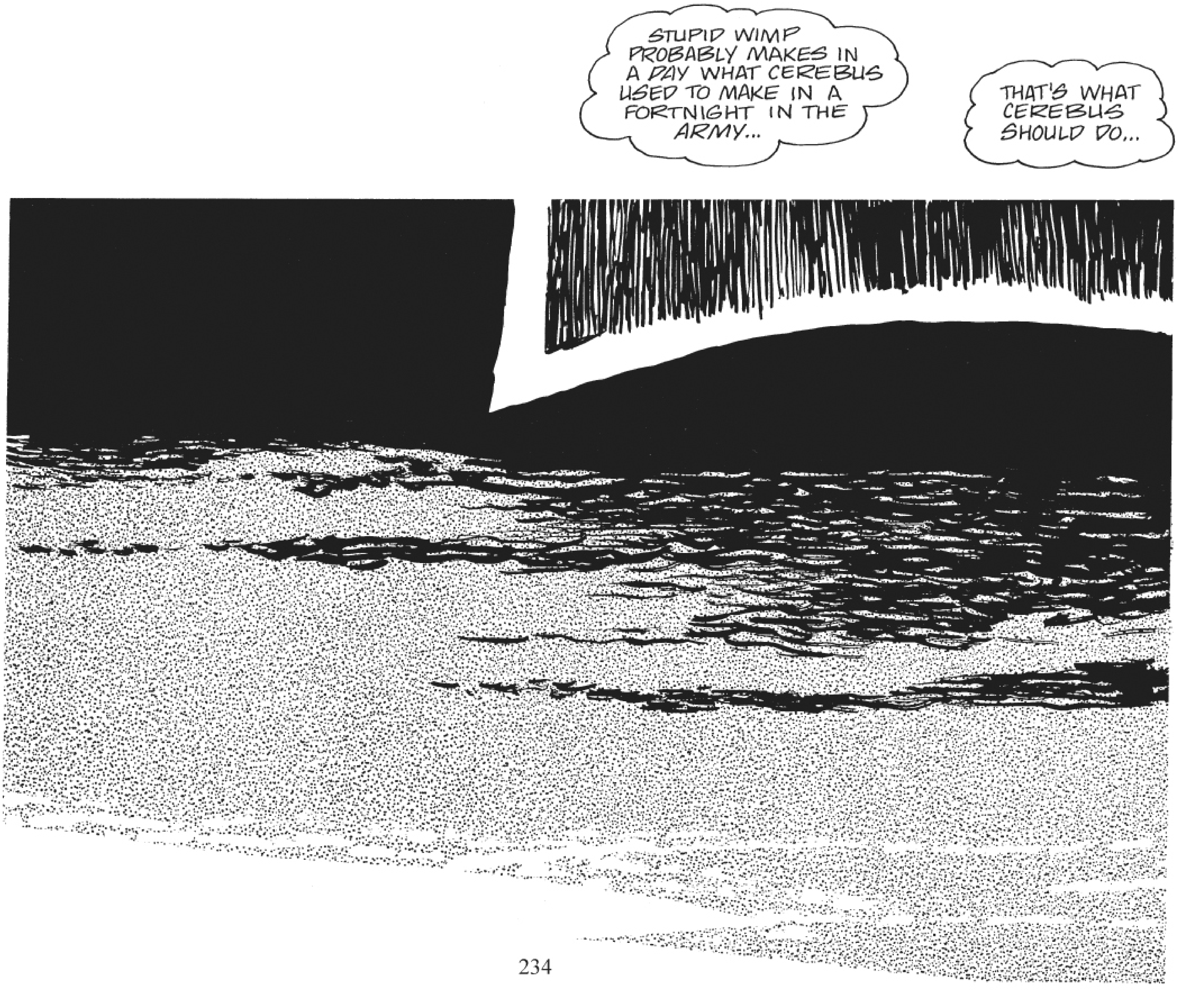

MIND GAME IV
CEREBUS WANTS AN *ALE*...
THERE *ISN'T* ANY ALE. HANEK TOLD CEREBUS *HIMSELF*...
THE ALE WON'T BE IN FOR THREE MORE DAYS...

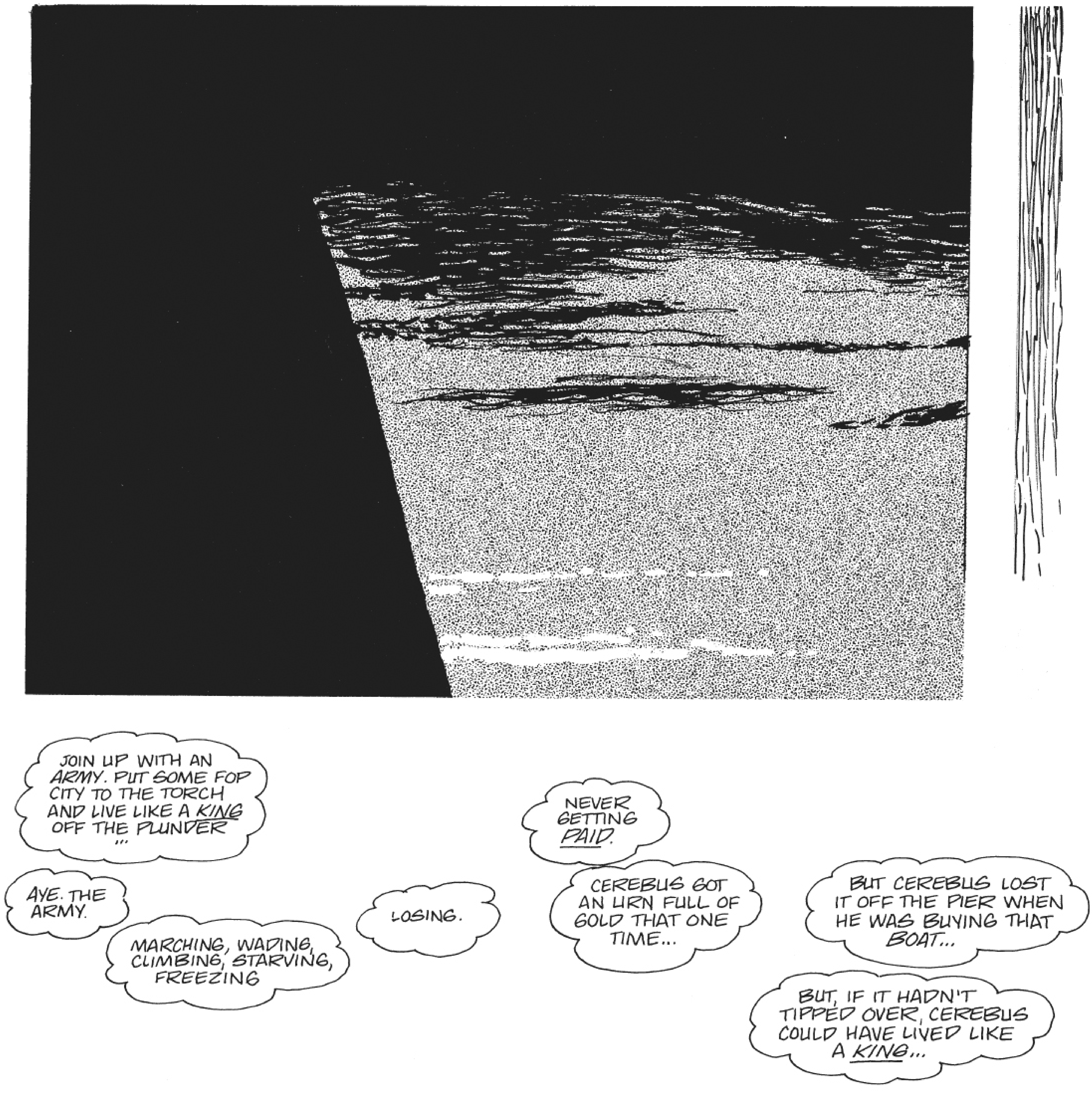

LOUSY HOTEL. CEREBUS WANTS A WHISKEY, THEN.
WHISKEY GIVES CEREBUS THE RUNS ...
CEREBUS WON'T DRINK THAT MUCH ...
CEREBUS ALWAYS SAYS HE WON'T DRINK THAT MUCH, BUT CEREBUS ALWAYS DOES...
CEREBUS WILL ORDER TWO SMALL GLASSES ...THE ONES THAT THEY BRING THE ORANGE JUICE IN...
THEY ALWAYS BRING THE BOTTLE AND CEREBUS ALWAYS TELLS THEM TO LEAVE IT...

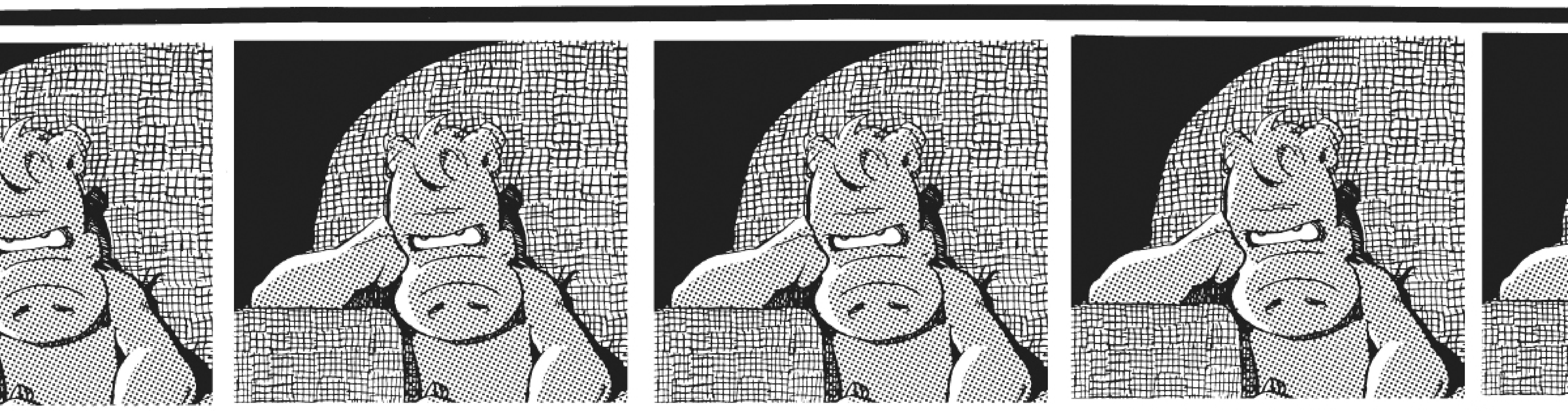

CEREBUS DOESN'T ALWAYS TELL THEM TO LEAVE IT...
NO. SOMETIMES CEREBUS JUST ORDERS A REFILL EVERY TWO MINUTES UNTIL THEY GET THE HINT AND LEAVE IT WITHOUT BEING ASKED...

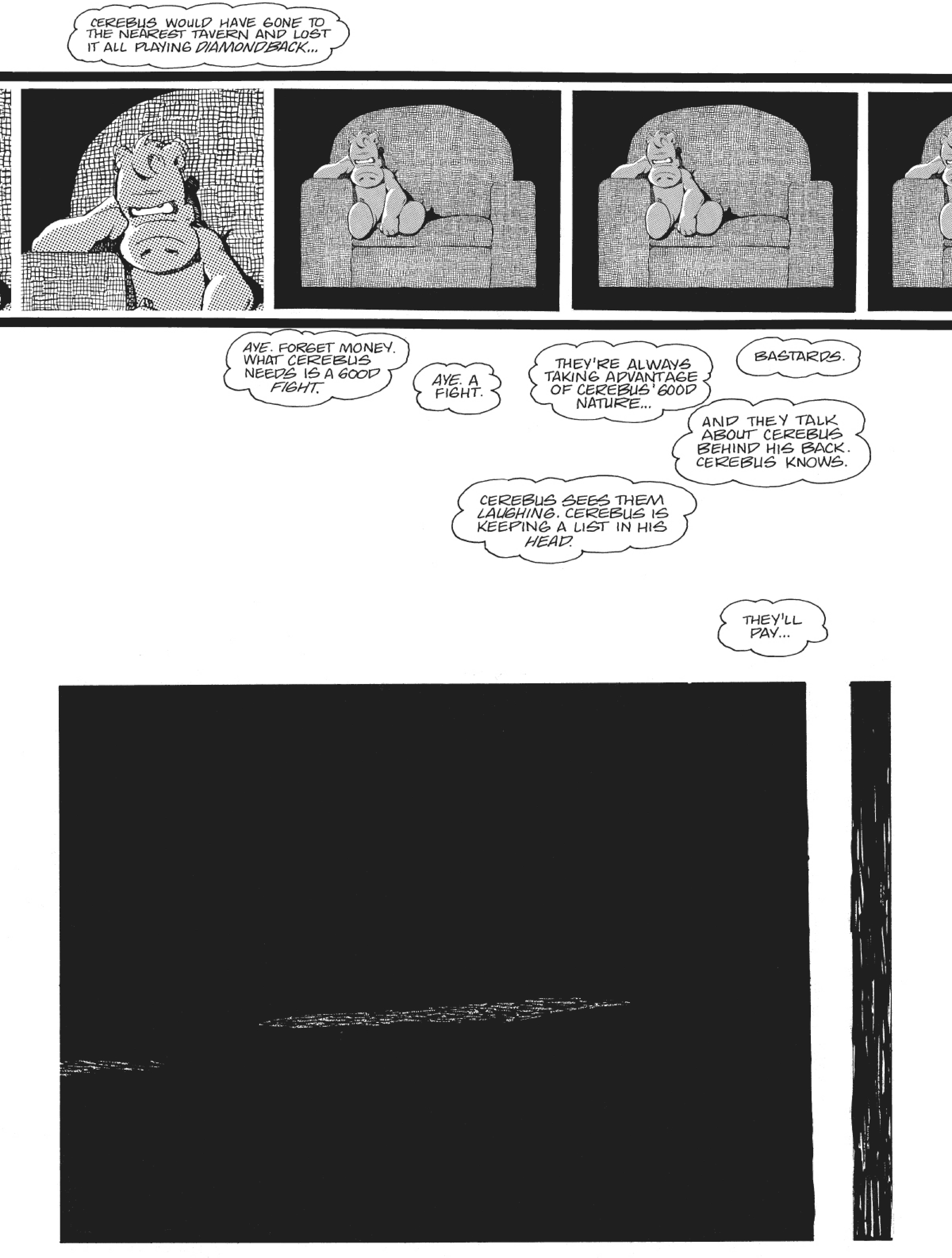

CEREBUS IS ONLY GOING TO DRINK UNTIL THE RIGHT SIDE OF HIS GUT STARTS TO *HURT*...
...AND THEN CEREBUS WILL DRINK FASTER TO KILL THE *PAIN*.
LIKE THAT TIME CEREBUS ALMOST *DIED* IN TANSUBAL ...
CEREBUS *QUIT* DRINKING THAT TIME...
FOR AN *AFTERNOON*.
ALMOST A *WHOLE DAY*.
ONLY BECAUSE CEREBUS PASSED OUT AT *DUSK* AND DIDN'T WAKE UP 'TIL *NOON*...
ONE DRINK.
UNCLE ERIC DIED OF IT...
IT WAS BETTER THAN LIVING WITH *AUNT ROSE*.
TRUE ENOUGH.

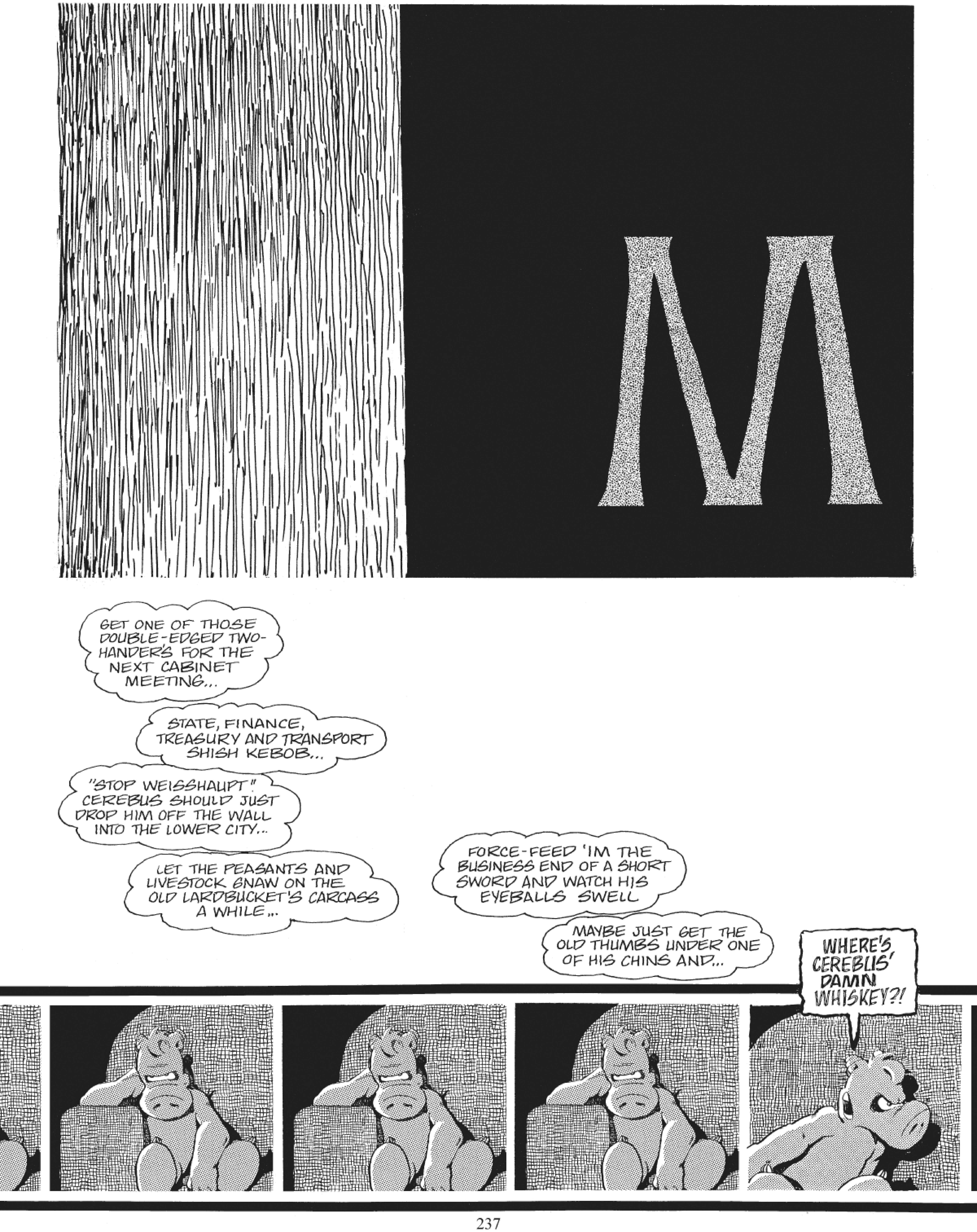

ONE.
TWO.
ONE.
TWO.
WHISKEY.
YES, MR. PRIME MINISTER. ONE BOTTLE OR TWO?
ONE.
ONE.
TWO.
ONE.

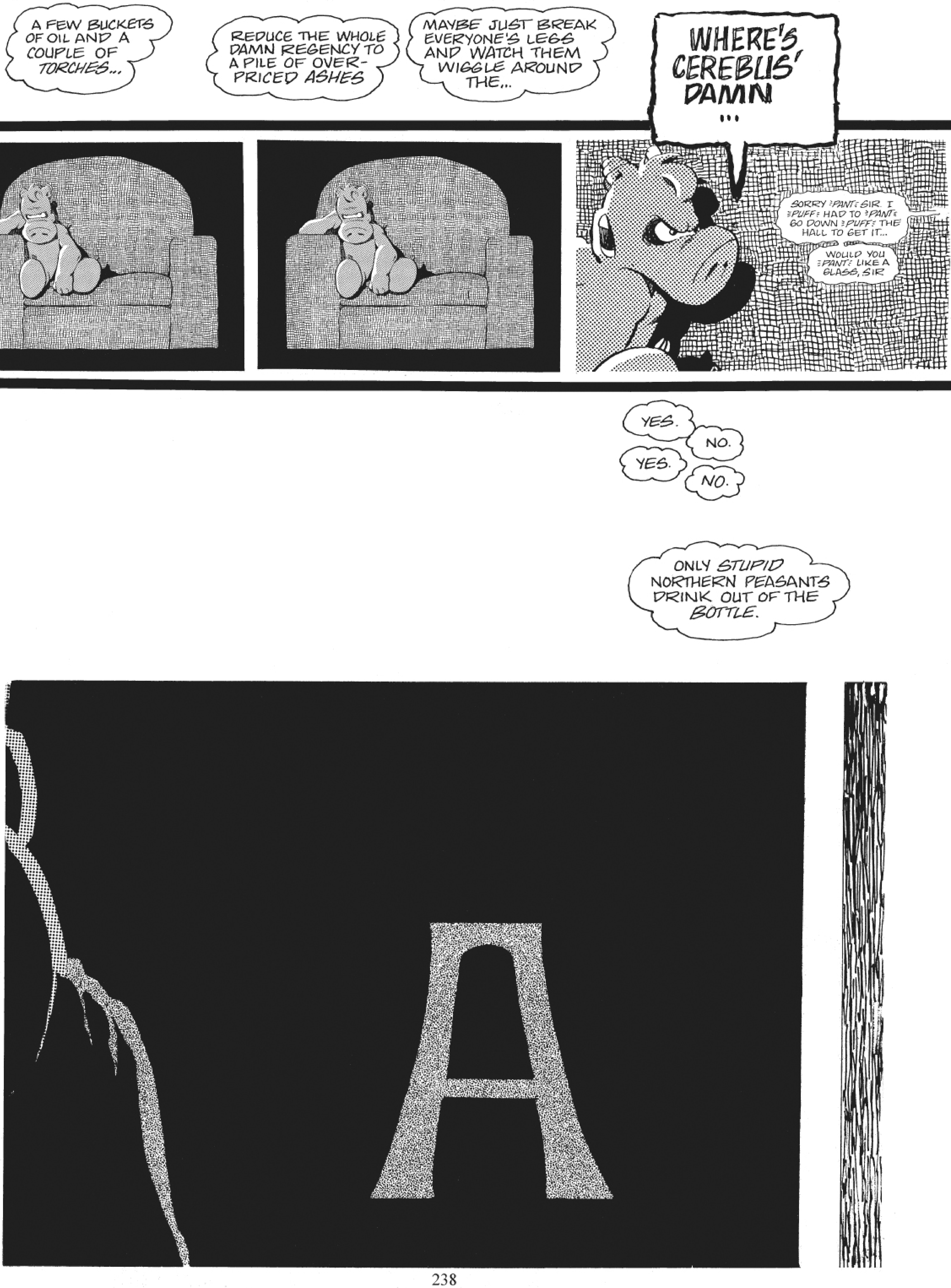

STUPID WIMP PROBABLY MAKES IN A DAY WHAT CEREBUS USED TO MAKE IN A FORTNIGHT IN THE ARMY...
THAT'S WHAT CEREBUS SHOULD DO...

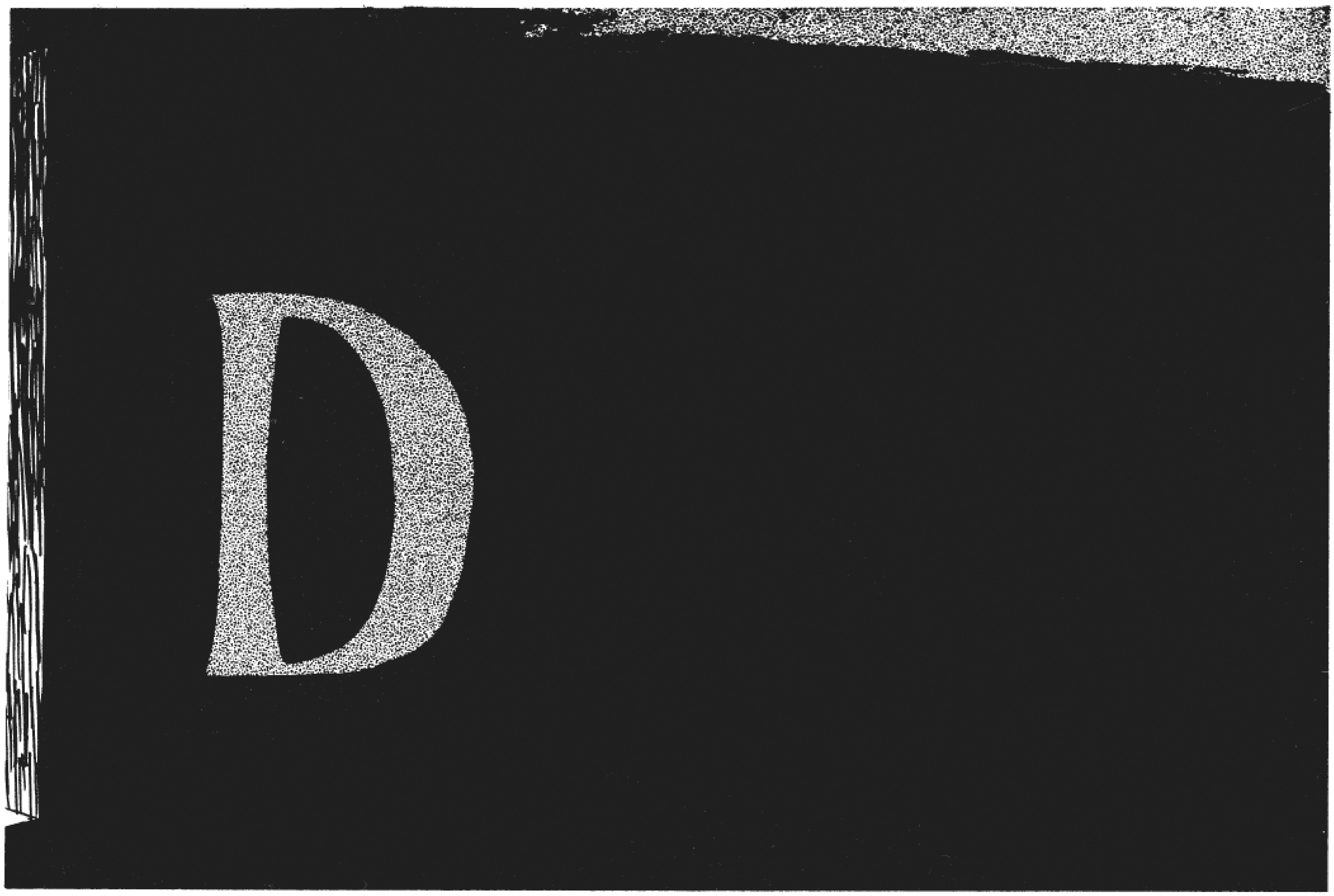

JOIN UP WITH AN *ARMY*. PUT SOME FOP CITY TO THE TORCH AND LIVE LIKE A *KING* OFF THE PLUNDER ...
AYE. THE ARMY.
MARCHING, WADING, CLIMBING, STARVING, FREEZING
LOSING.
NEVER GETTING *PAID*.
CEREBUS GOT AN URN FULL OF GOLD THAT ONE TIME...
BUT CEREBUS LOST IT OFF THE PIER WHEN HE WAS BUYING THAT *BOAT*...
BUT, IF IT HADN'T TIPPED OVER, CEREBUS COULD HAVE LIVED LIKE A *KING*...




CEREBUS WOULD HAVE GONE TO THE NEAREST TAVERN AND LOST IT ALL PLAYING *DIAMONDBACK*...
AYE. FORGET MONEY. WHAT CEREBUS NEEDS IS A GOOD *FIGHT*.
AYE. A FIGHT.
THEY'RE ALWAYS TAKING ADVANTAGE OF CEREBUS' GOOD NATURE...
BASTARDS.
AND THEY TALK ABOUT CEREBUS BEHIND HIS BACK. CEREBUS KNOWS.
CEREBUS SEES THEM *LAUGHING*. CEREBUS IS KEEPING A LIST IN HIS *HEAD*.
THEY'LL PAY...


M
GET ONE OF THOSE DOUBLE-EDGED TWO-HANDER'S FOR THE NEXT CABINET MEETING...
STATE, FINANCE, TREASURY AND TRANSPORT SHISH KEBOB...
"STOP WEISSHAUPT." CEREBUS SHOULD JUST DROP HIM OFF THE WALL INTO THE LOWER CITY...
LET THE PEASANTS AND LIVESTOCK GNAW ON THE OLD LARDBUCKET'S CARCASS A WHILE...
FORCE-FEED 'IM THE BUSINESS END OF A SHORT SWORD AND WATCH HIS EYEBALLS SWELL
MAYBE JUST GET THE OLD THUMBS UNDER ONE OF HIS CHINS AND...
WHERE'S CEREBUS' DAMN WHISKEY?!


A FEW BUCKETS OF OIL AND A COUPLE OF *TORCHES*...
REDUCE THE WHOLE DAMN REGENCY TO A PILE OF OVER-PRICED *ASHES*
MAYBE JUST BREAK EVERYONE'S LEGS AND WATCH THEM WIGGLE AROUND THE...
WHERE'S CEREBUS' DAMN ...
SORRY ⁝PANT⁝ SIR. I ⁝PUFF⁝ HAD TO ⁝PANT⁝ GO DOWN ⁝PUFF⁝ THE HALL TO GET IT...
WOULD YOU ⁝PANT⁝ LIKE A GLASS, SIR
YES.
NO.
YES.
NO.
ONLY *STUPID* NORTHERN PEASANTS DRINK OUT OF THE *BOTTLE*.
A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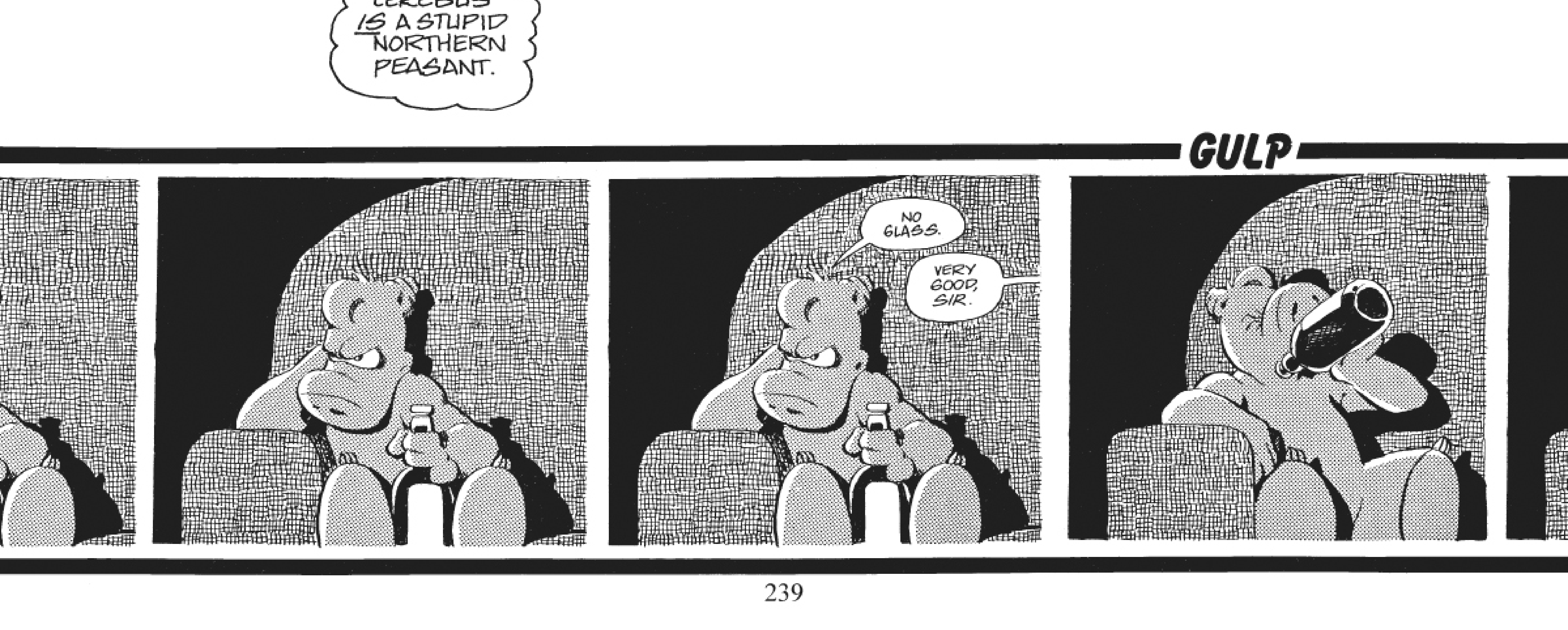
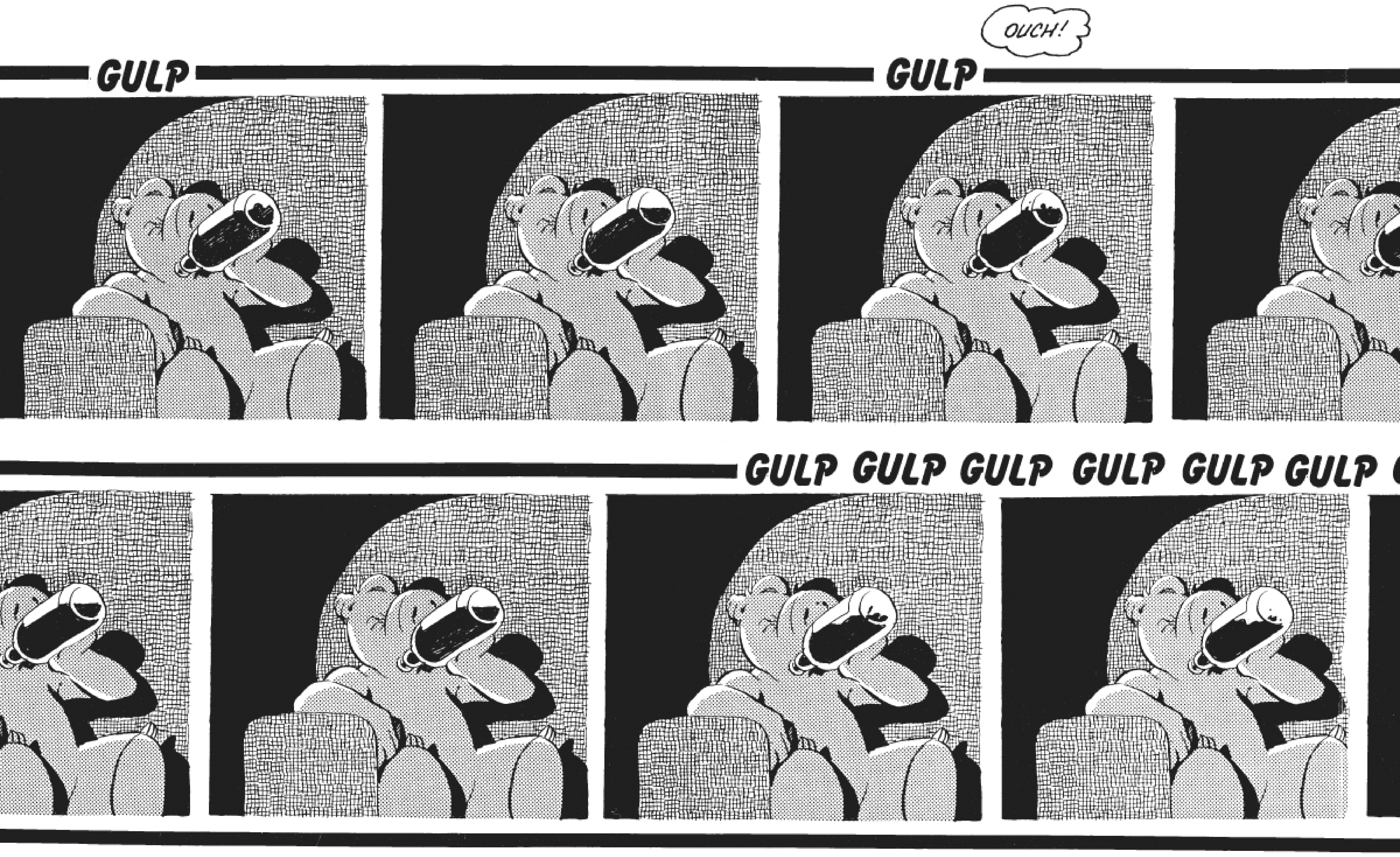
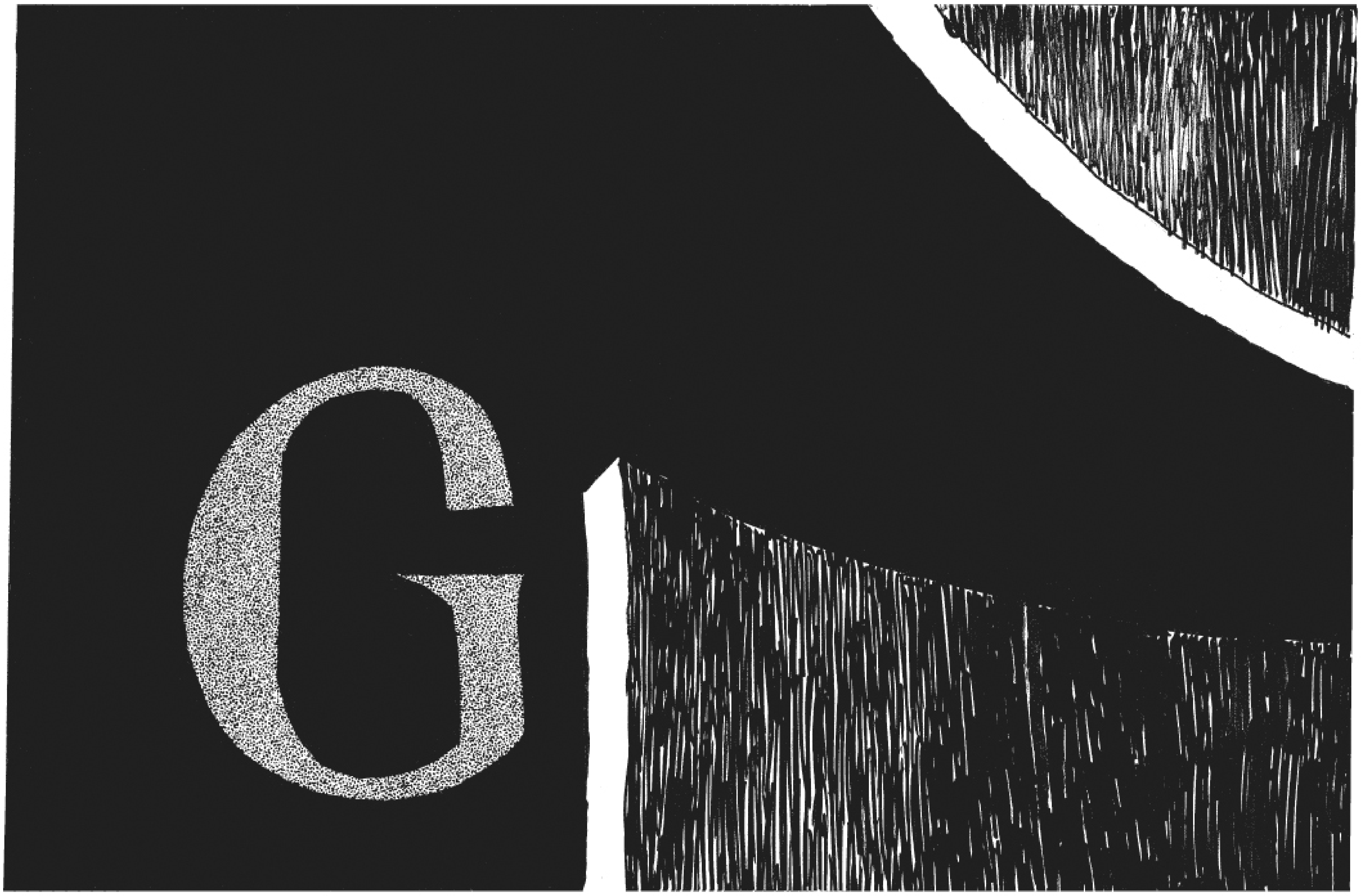

CEREBUS *IS* A STUPID NORTHERN PEASANT.
GULP
NO GLASS.
VERY GOOD, SIR.


GULP
OUCH!
GULP
GULP GULP GULP GULP GULP GULP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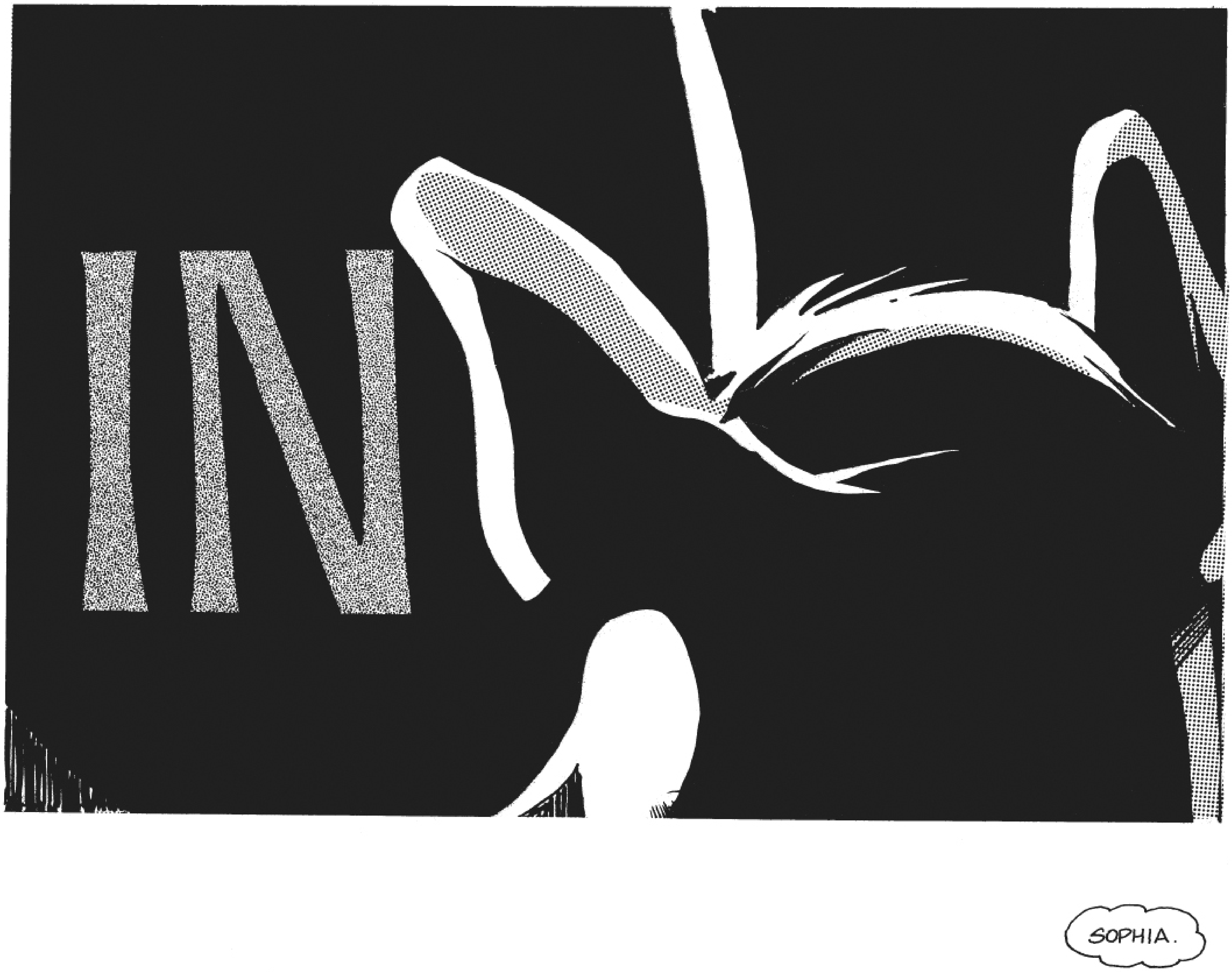
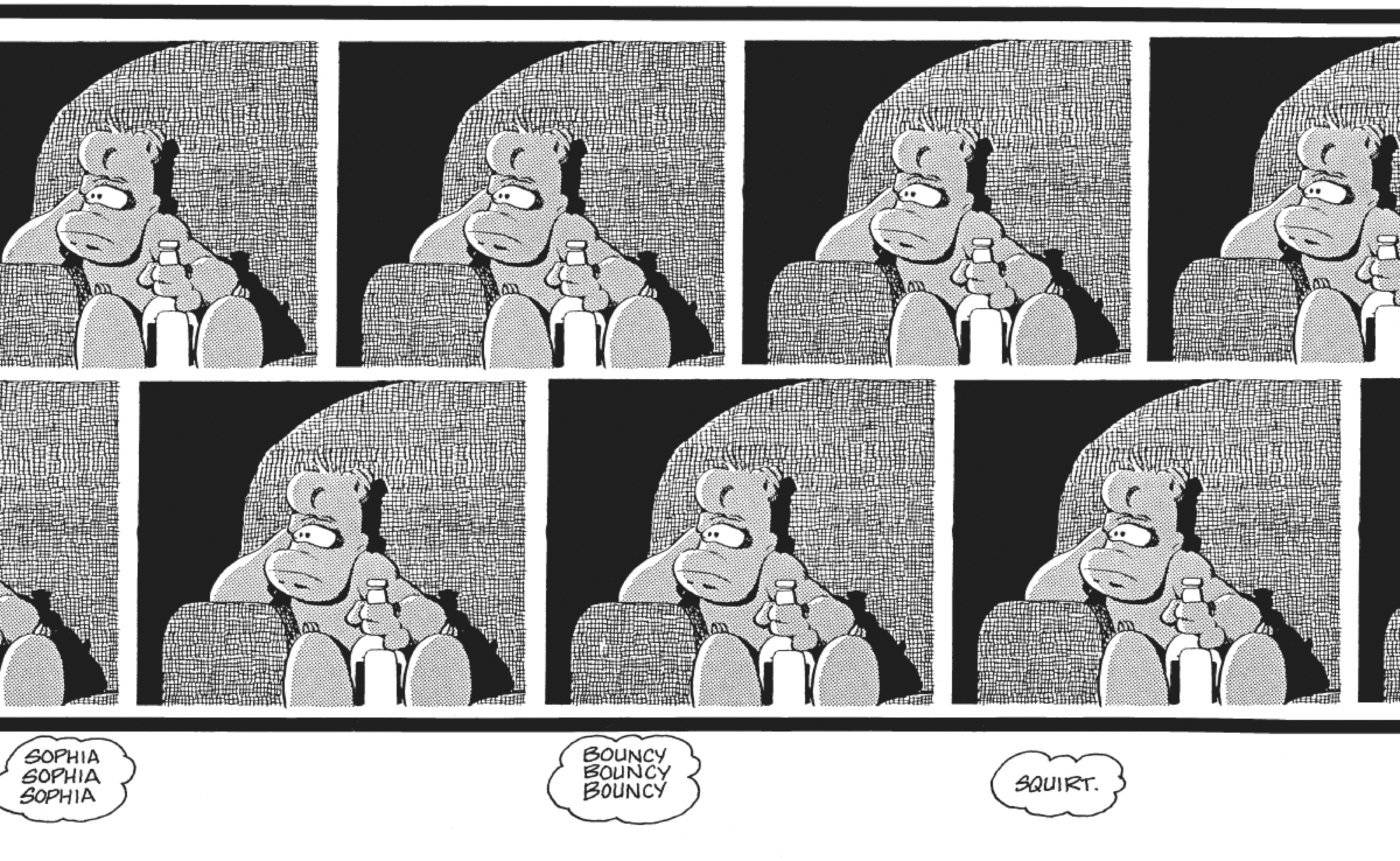
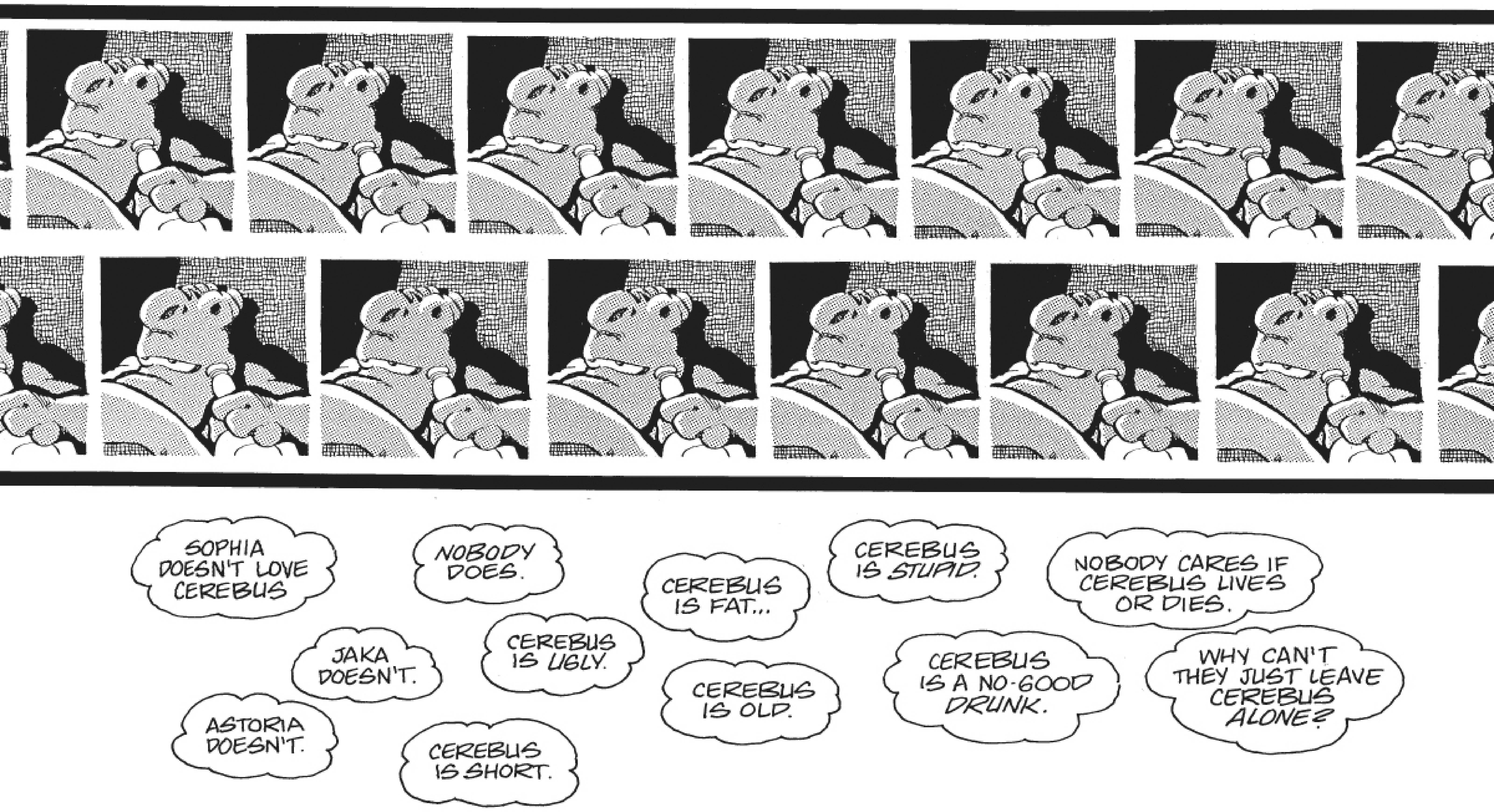
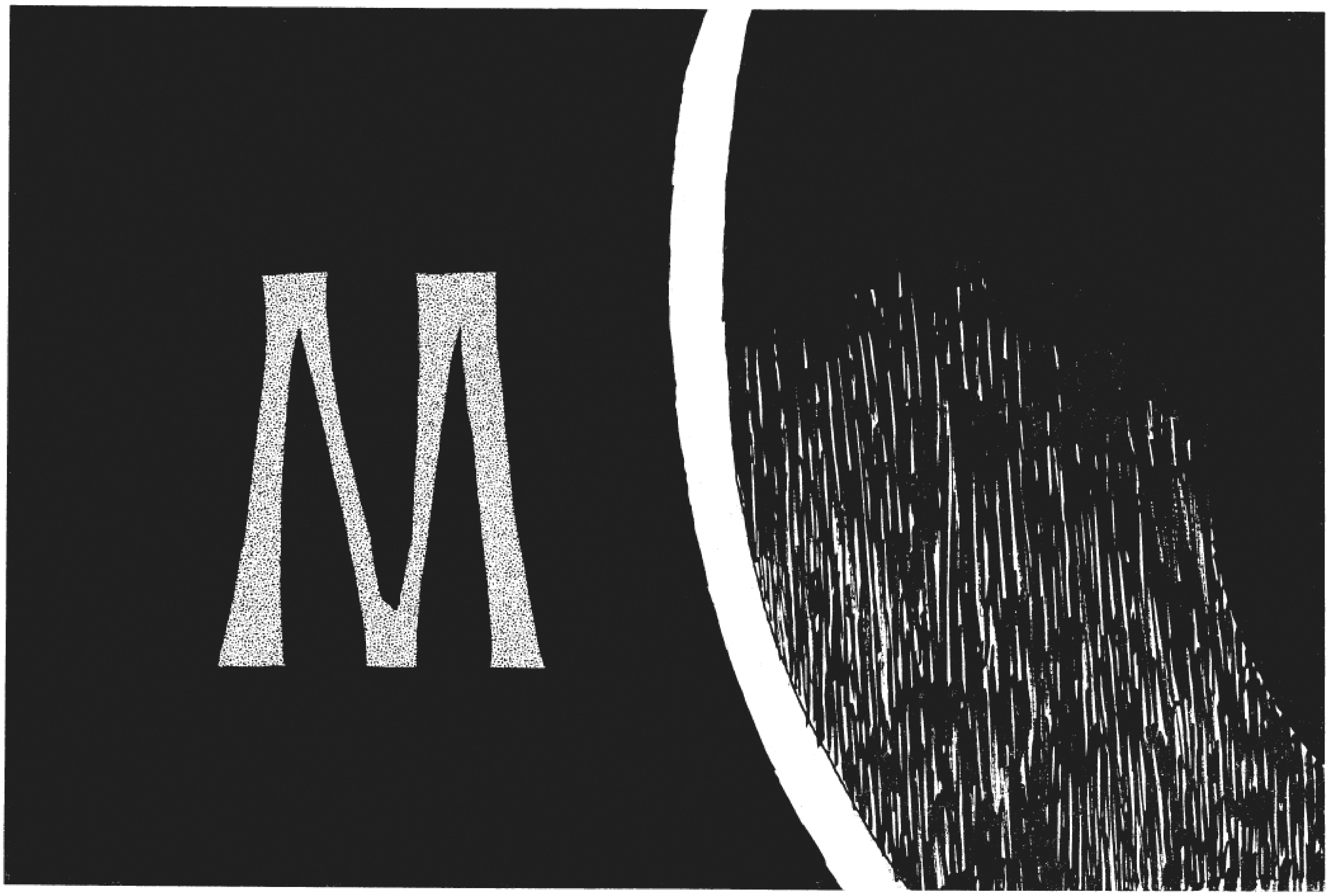

IN
SOPHIA.


SOPHIA
SOPHIA
SOPHIA
BOUNCY
BOUNCY
BOUNCY
SQUIRT.


SOPHIA DOESN'T LOVE CEREBUS
JAKA DOESN'T.
ASTORIA DOESN'T.
NOBODY DOES.
CEREBUS IS *UGLY.*
CEREBUS IS SHORT.
CEREBUS IS FAT...
CEREBUS IS OLD.
CEREBUS IS *STUPID.*
CEREBUS IS A NO-GOOD *DRUNK.*
NOBODY CARES IF CEREBUS LIVES OR DIES.
WHY CAN'T THEY JUST LEAVE CEREBUS *ALONE?*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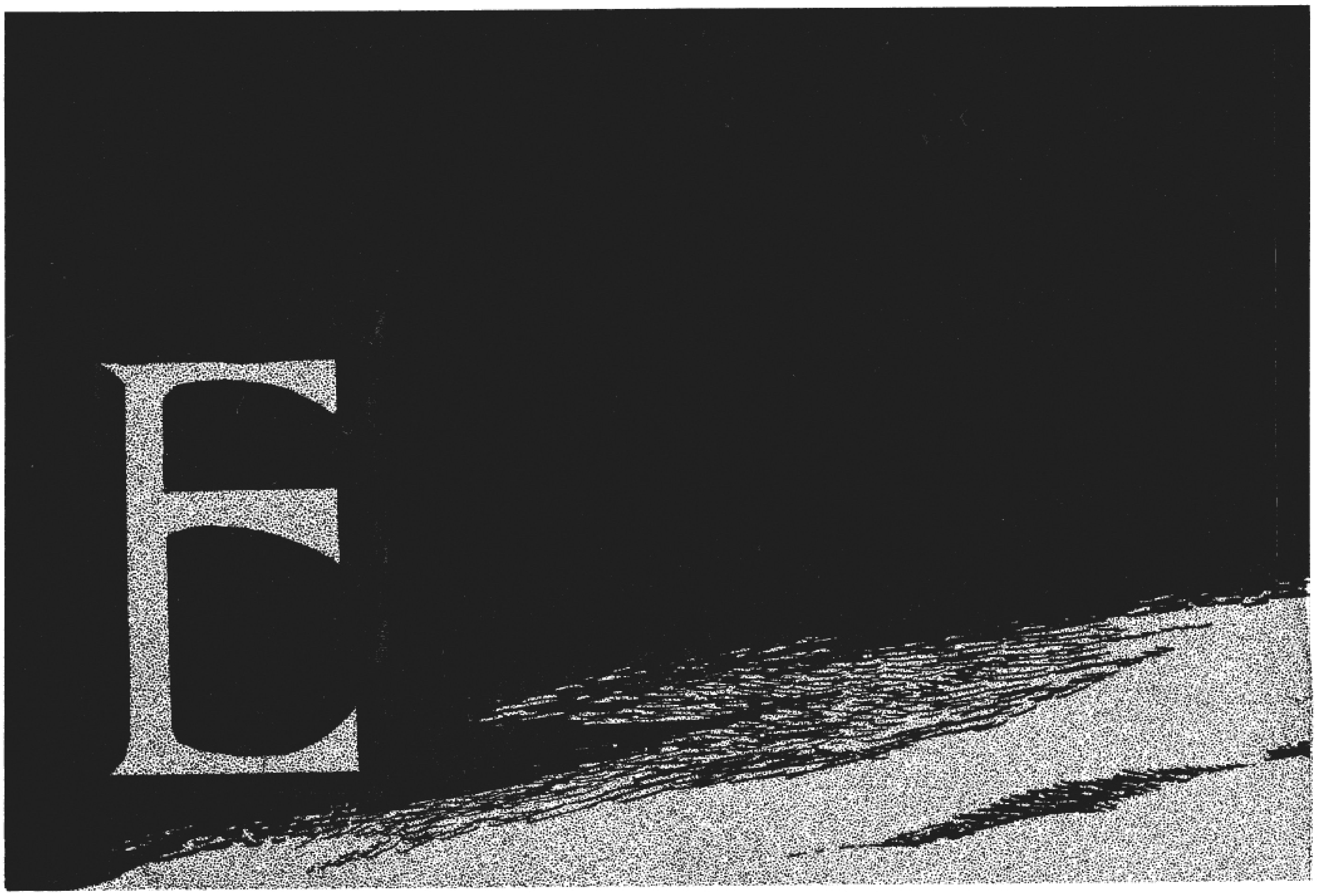
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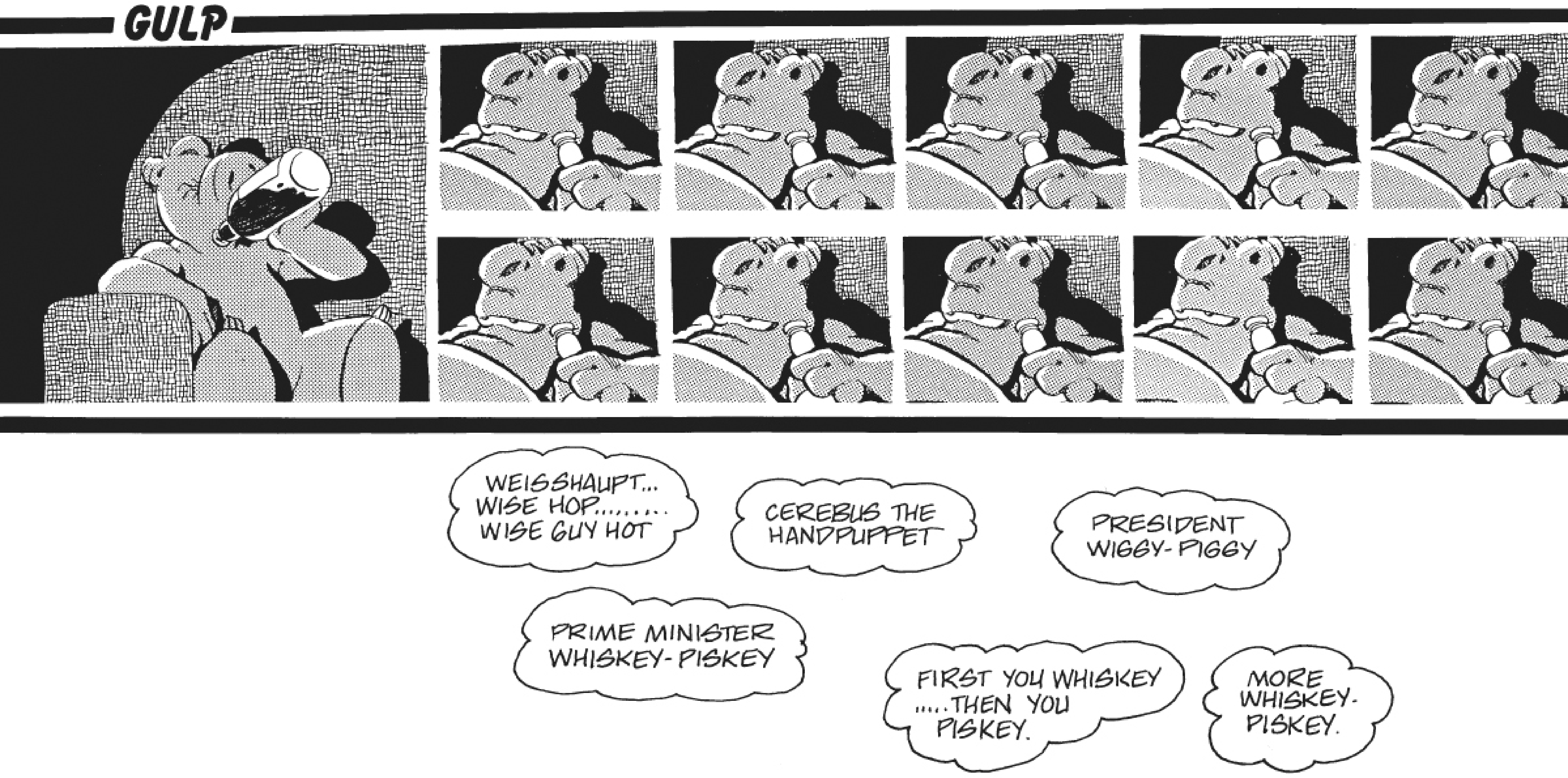
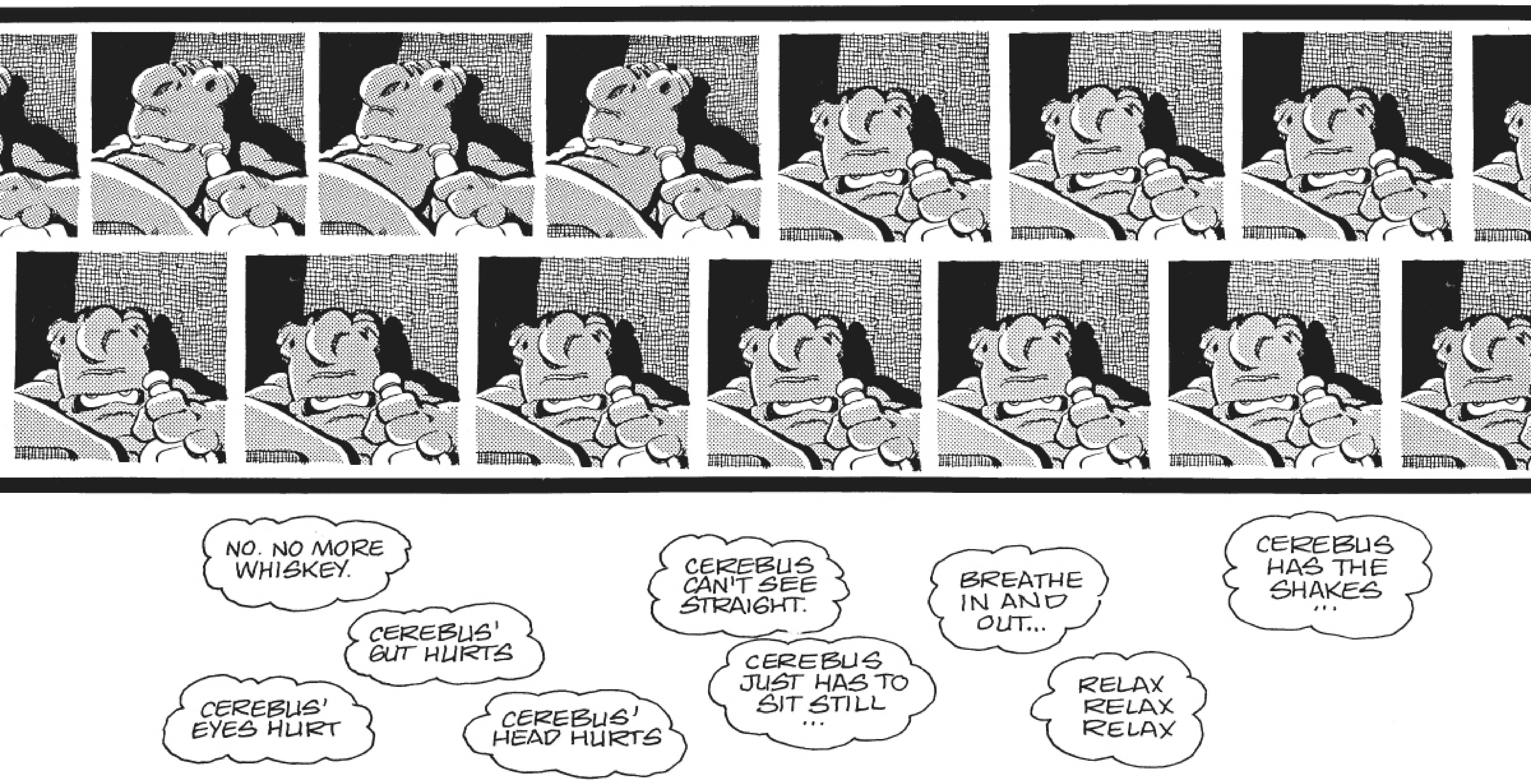
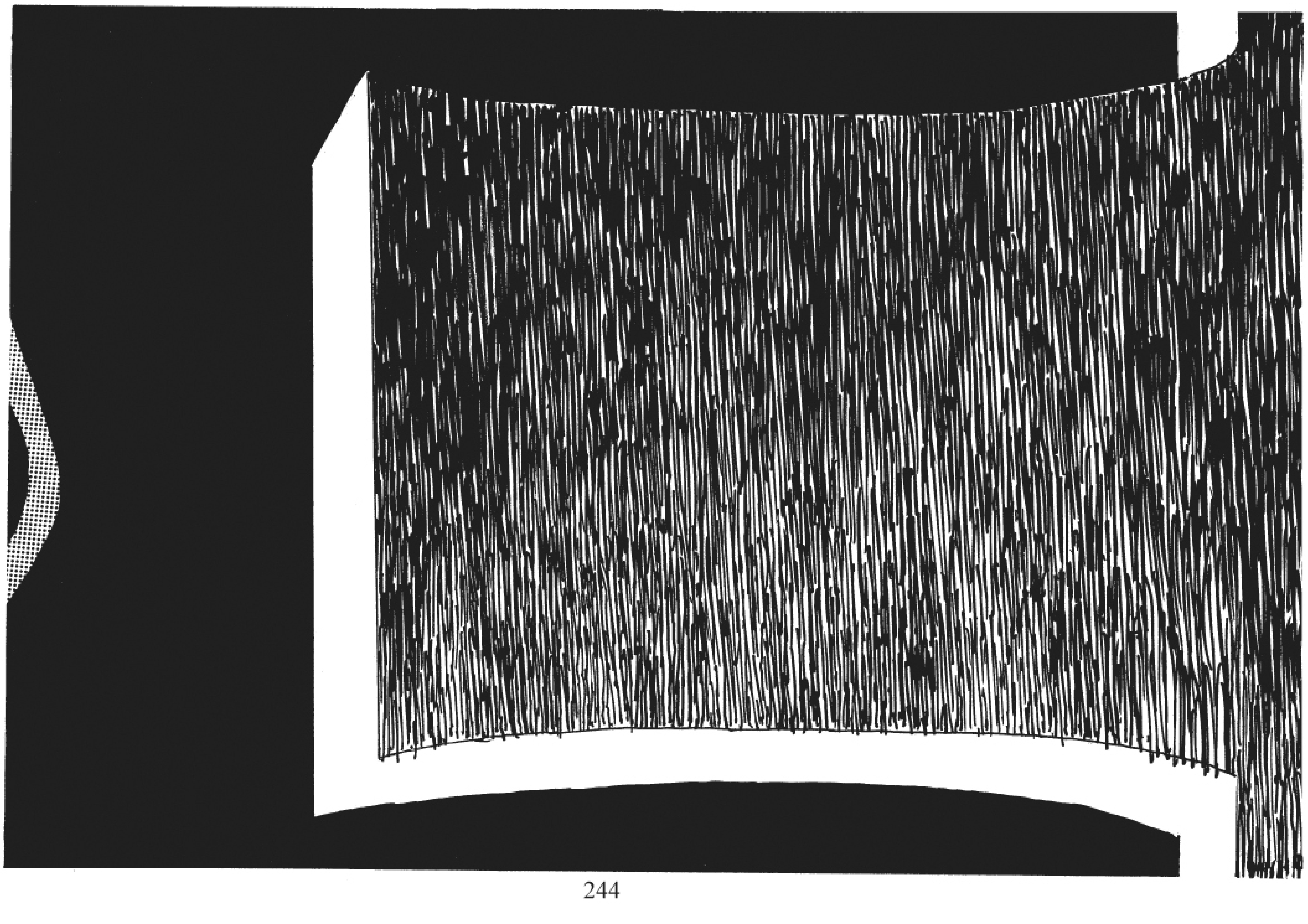
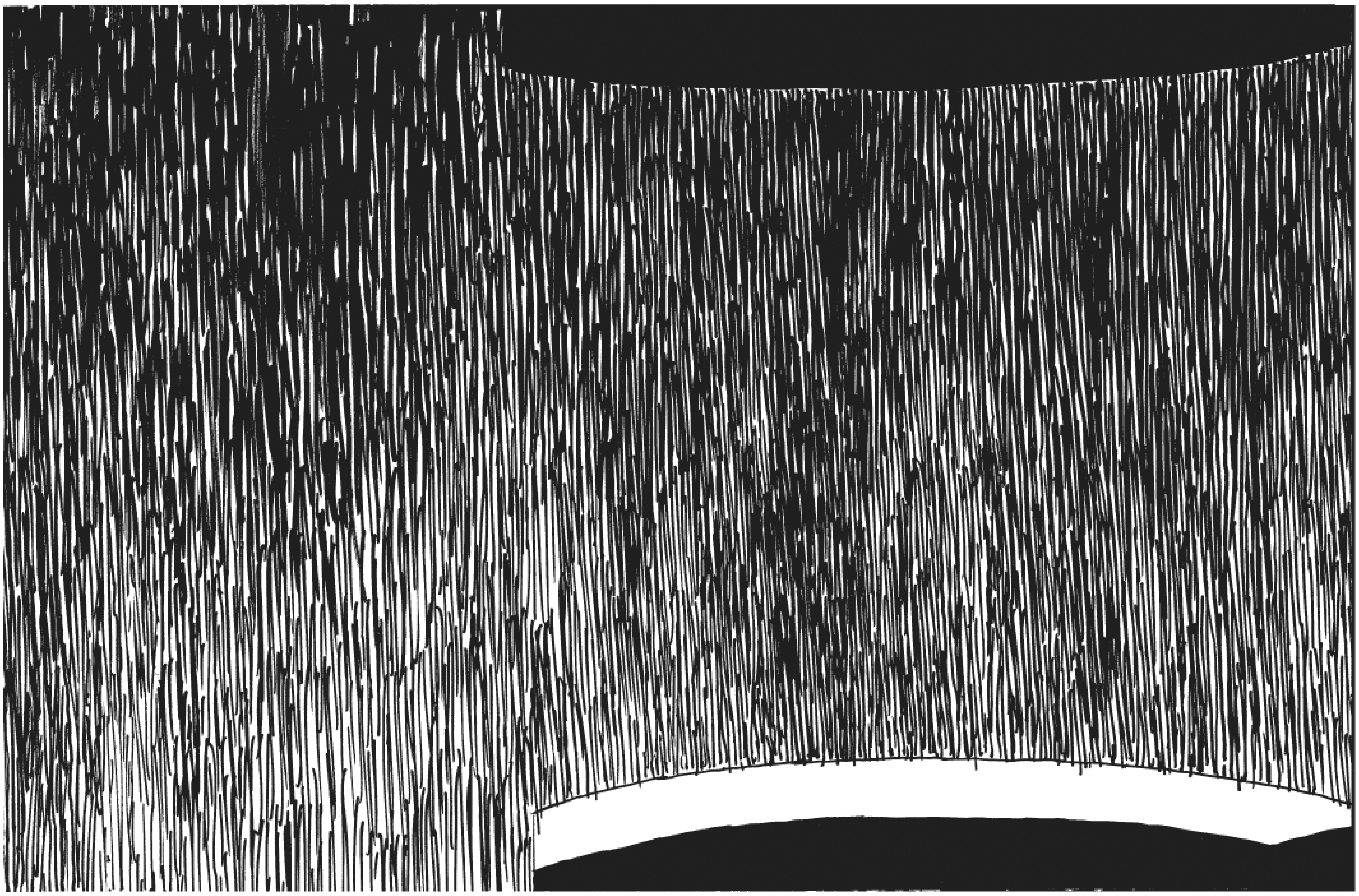
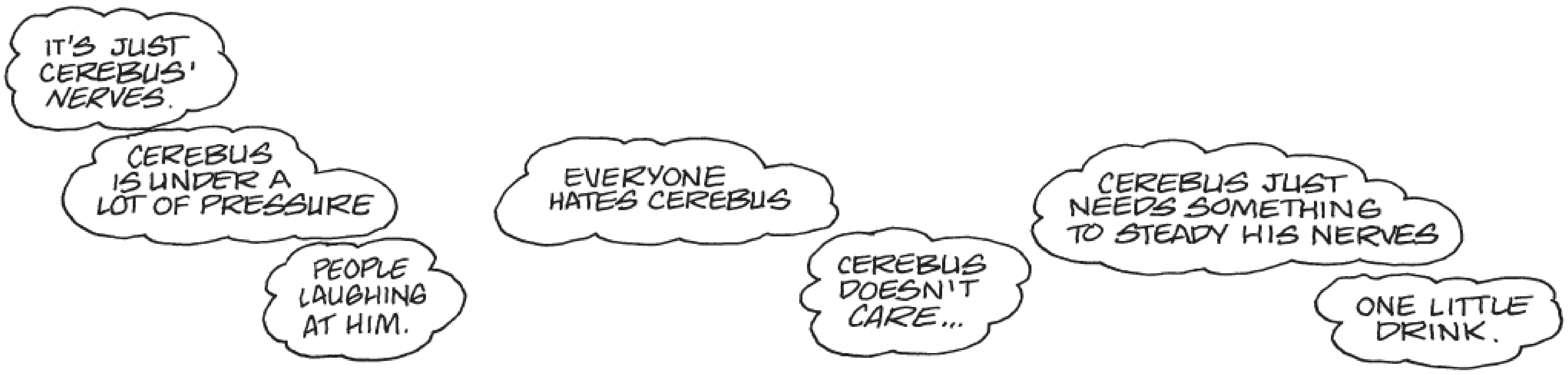
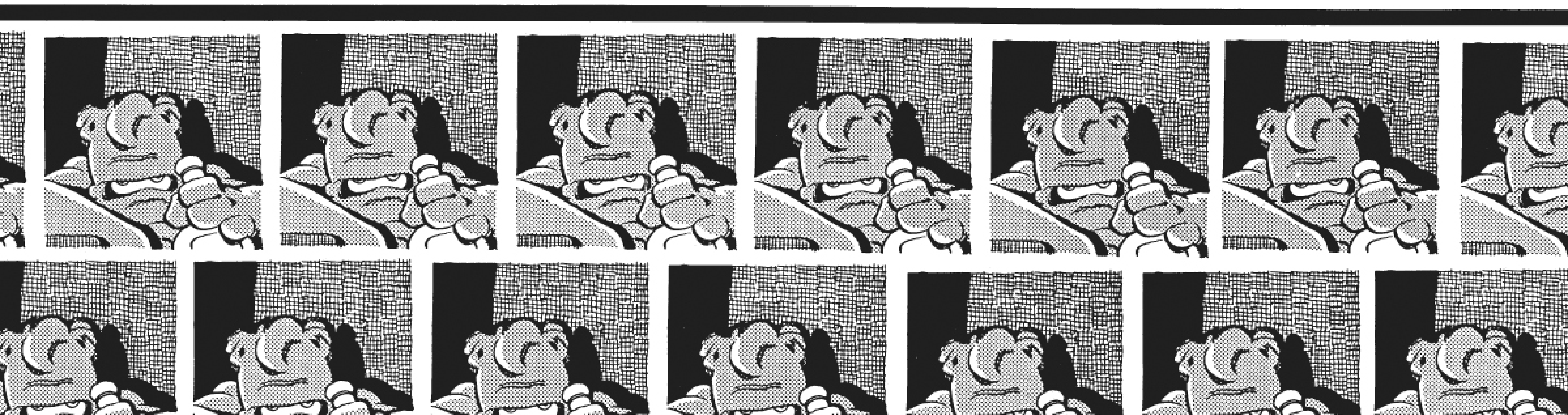

GULP
WEISSHAUPT... WISE HOP......... WISE GUY HOT
CEREBUS THE HANDPUPPET
PRESIDENT WIGGY-PIGGY
PRIME MINISTER WHISKEY-PISKEY
FIRST YOU WHISKEY .....THEN YOU PISKEY.
MORE WHISKEY-PISKEY.

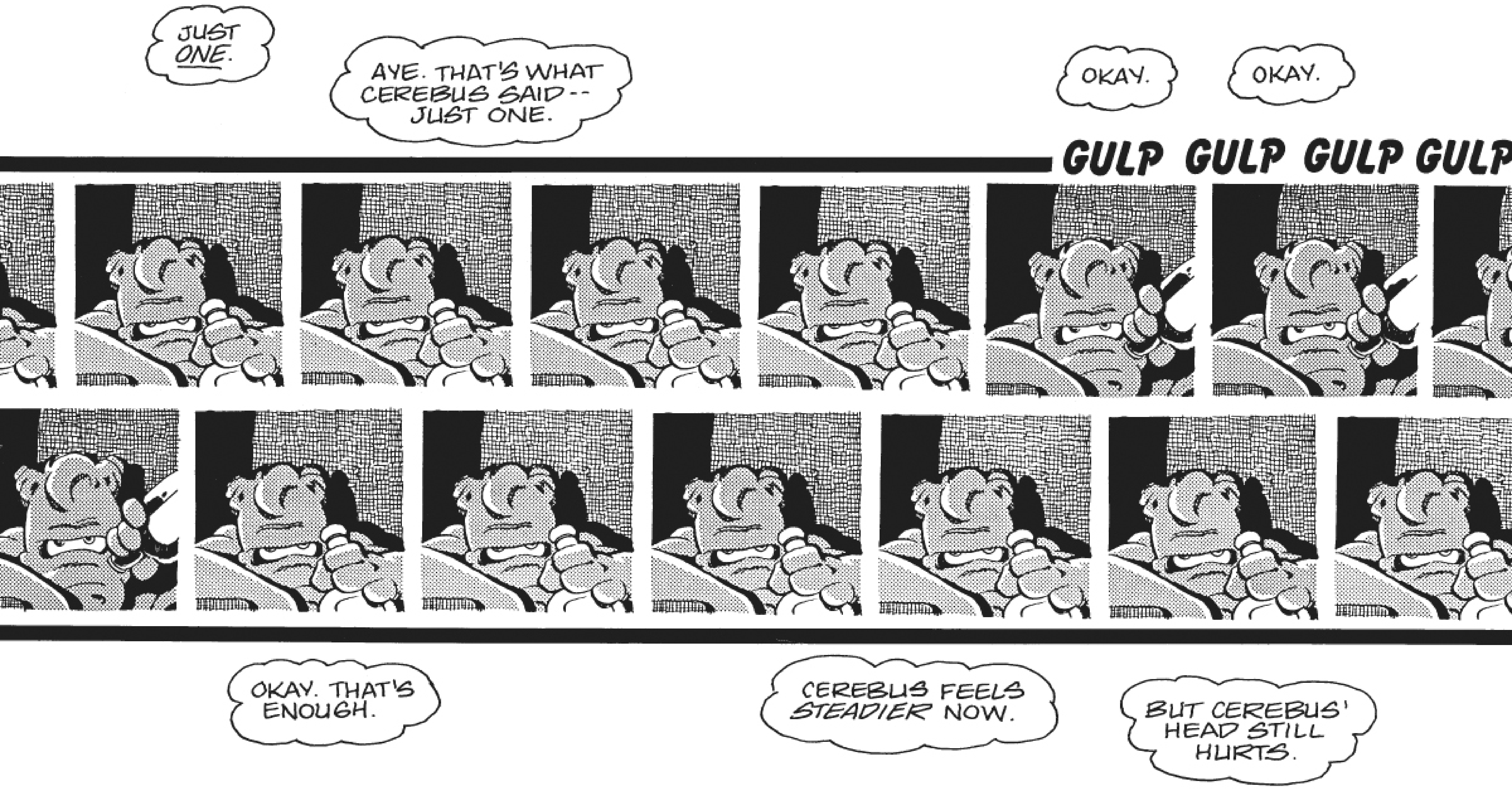

NO. NO MORE WHISKEY.
CEREBUS' GUT HURTS
CEREBUS' EYES HURT
CEREBUS' HEAD HURTS
CEREBUS CAN'T SEE STRAIGHT.
CEREBUS JUST HAS TO SIT STILL ...
BREATHE IN AND OUT...
RELAX RELAX RELAX
CEREBUS HAS THE SHAKES ...

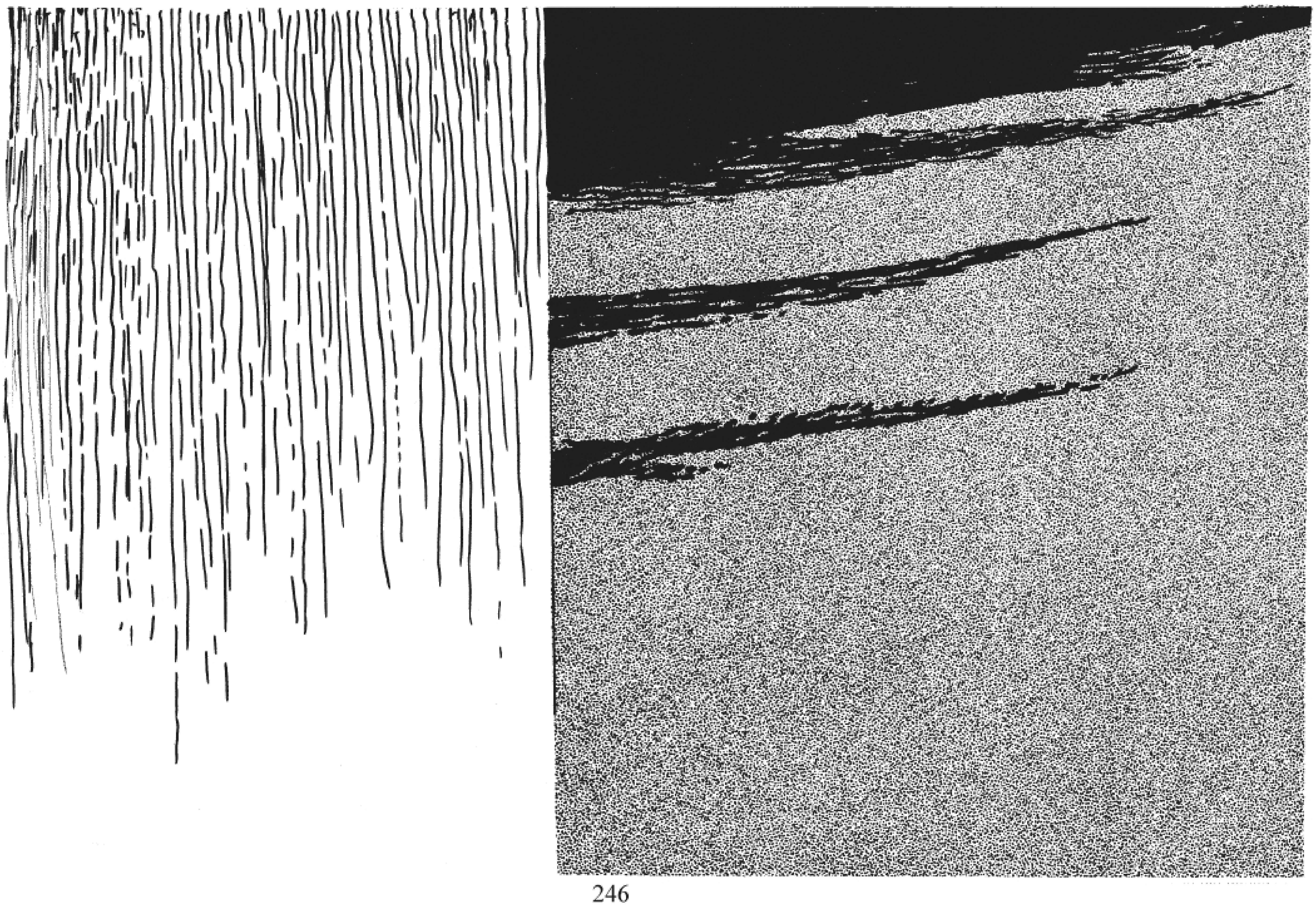


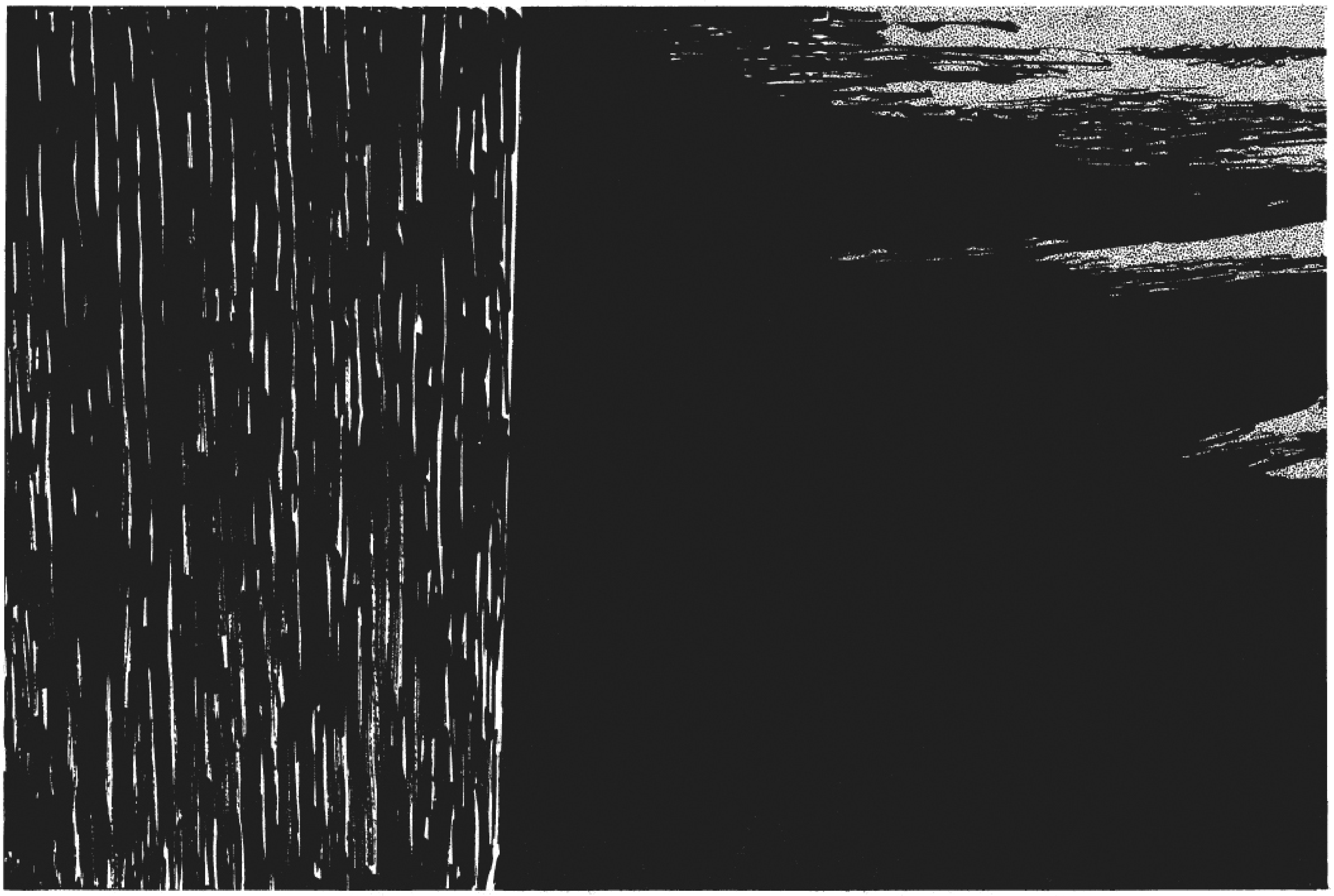


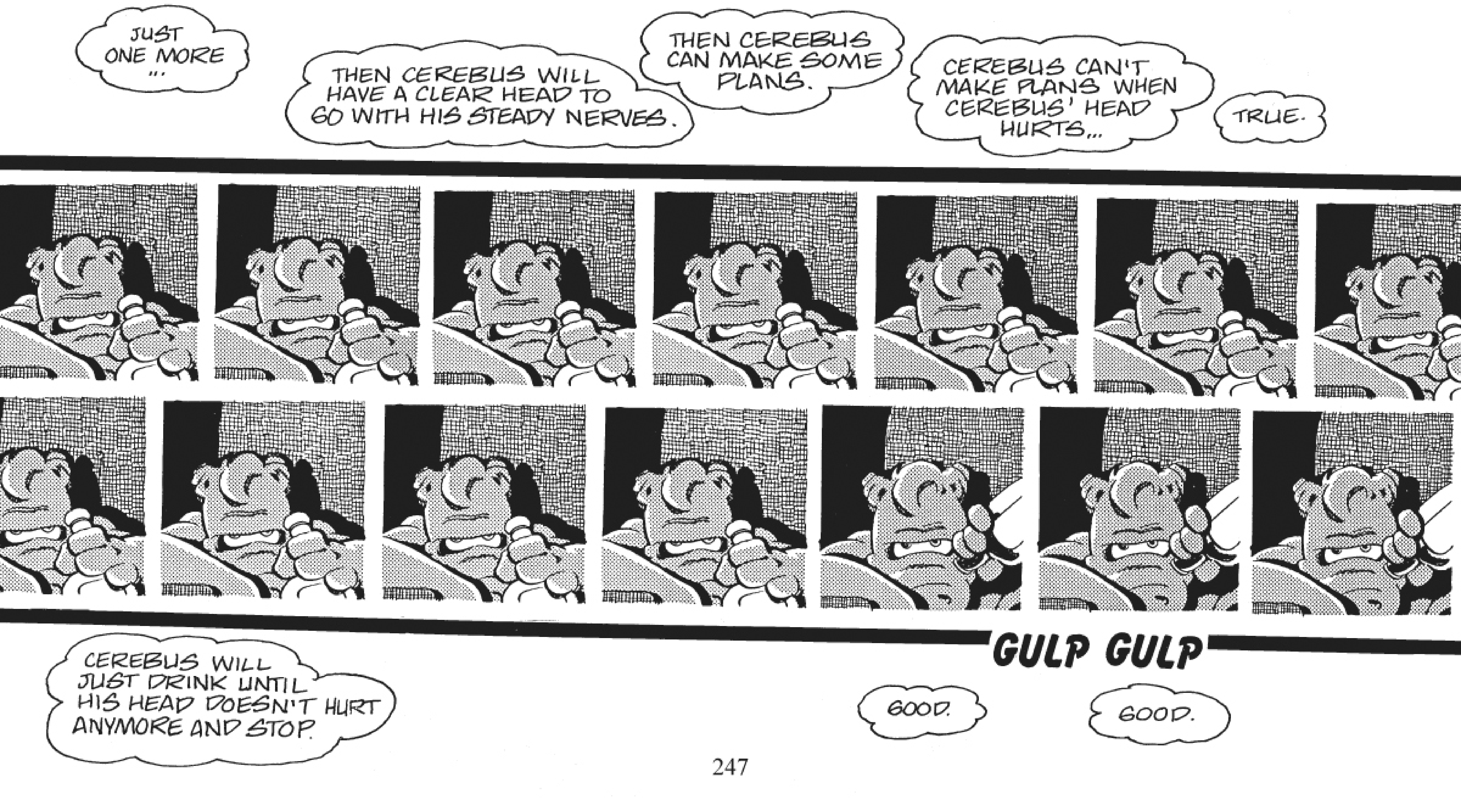

IT'S JUST CEREBUS' NERVES.
CEREBUS IS UNDER A LOT OF PRESSURE
PEOPLE LAUGHING AT HIM.
EVERYONE HATES CEREBUS
CEREBUS DOESN'T CARE...
CEREBUS JUST NEEDS SOMETHING TO STEADY HIS NERVES
ONE LITTLE DRINK.

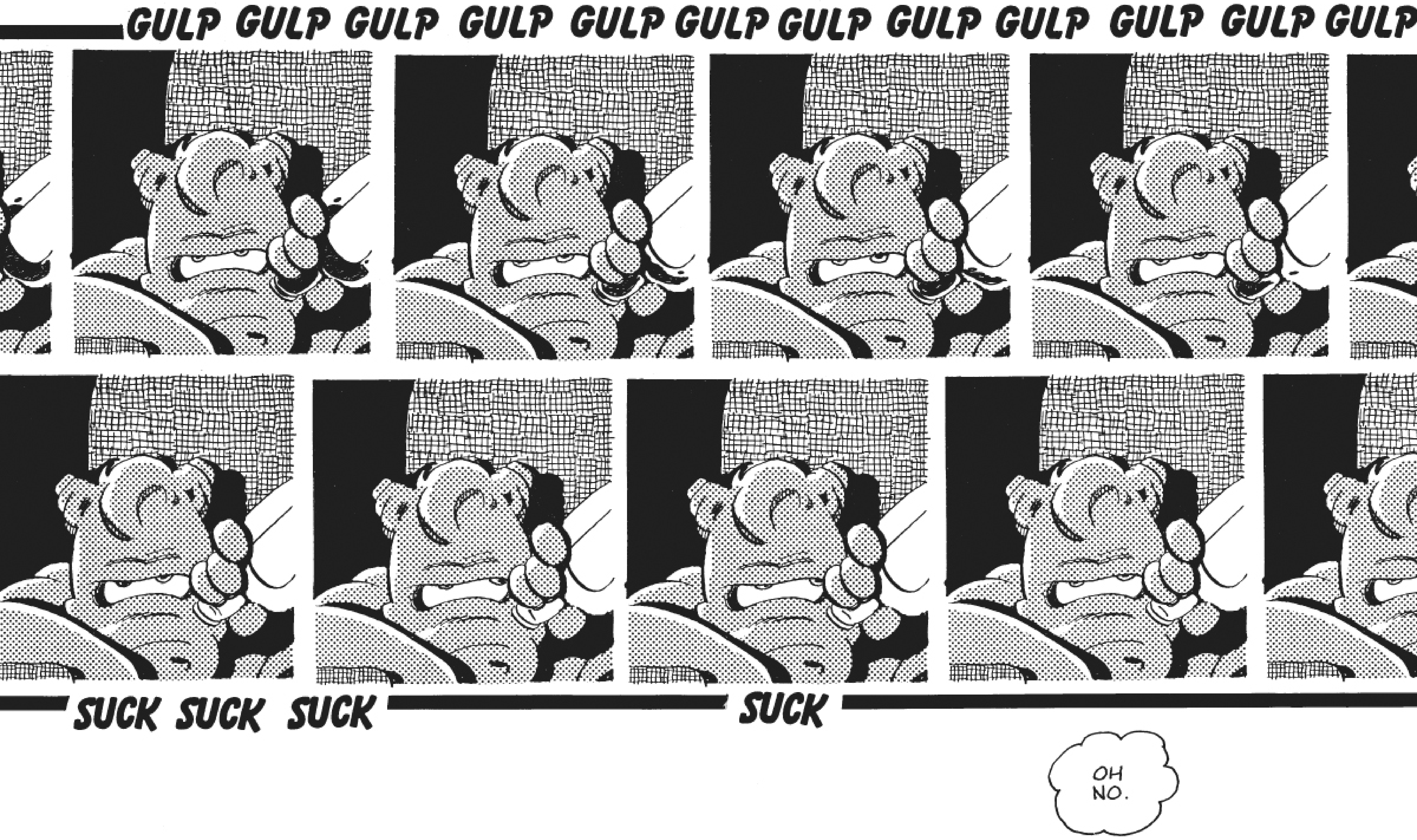


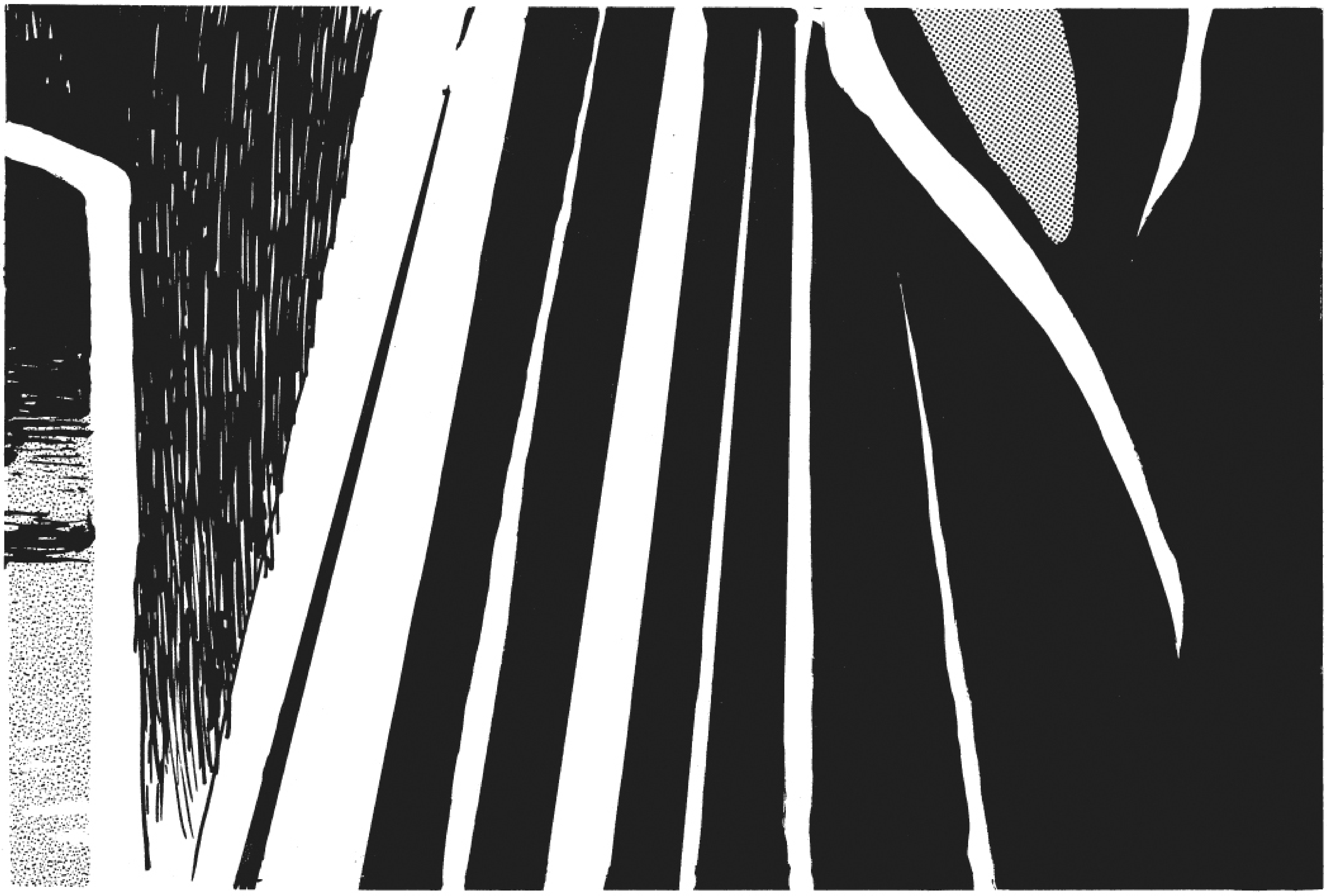

JUST *ONE*.
AYE. THAT'S WHAT CEREBUS SAID-- JUST ONE.
OKAY.
OKAY.
GULP GULP GULP GULP
OKAY. THAT'S ENOUGH.
CEREBUS FEELS *STEADIER* NOW.
BUT CEREBUS' HEAD STILL HURTS.

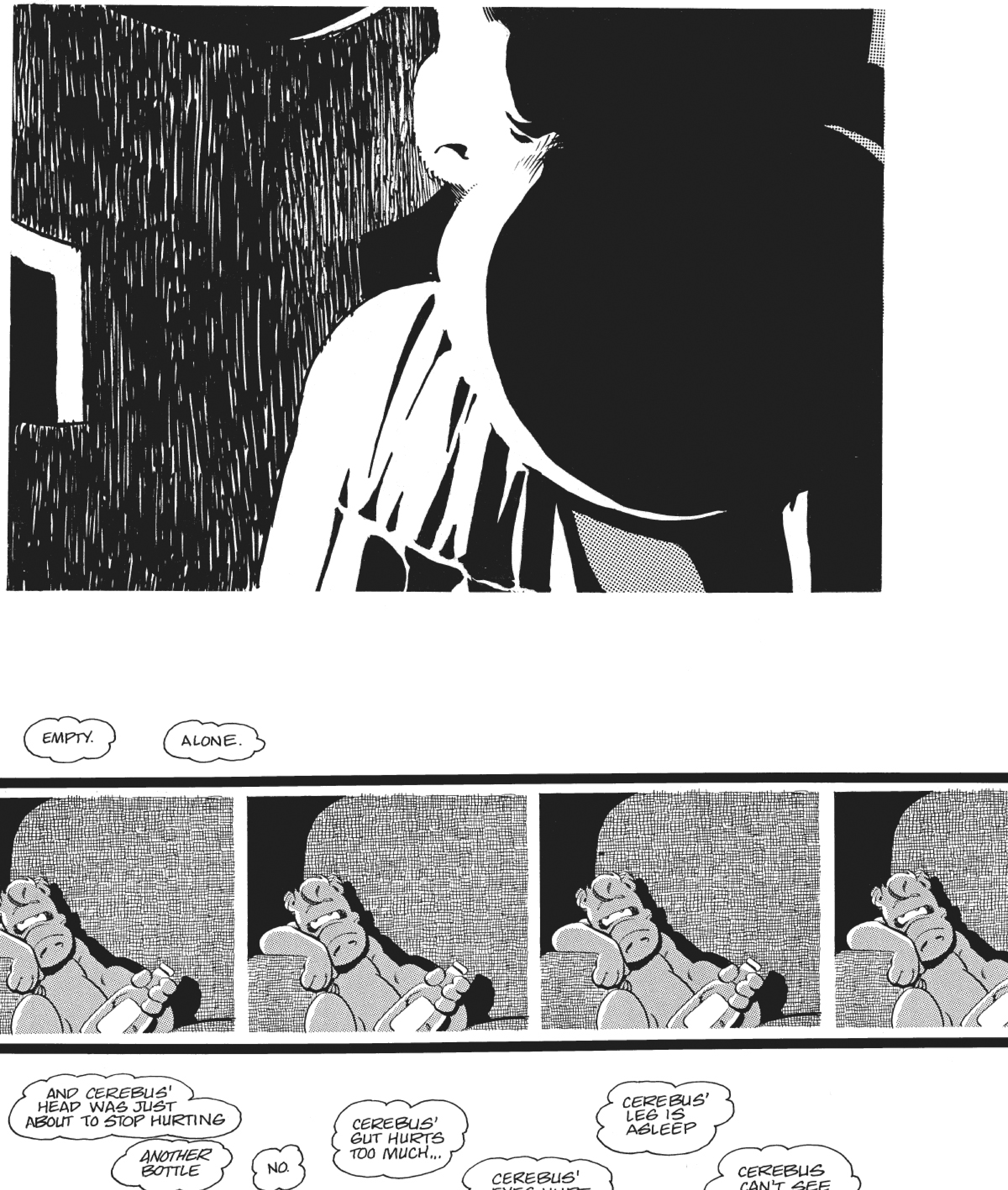


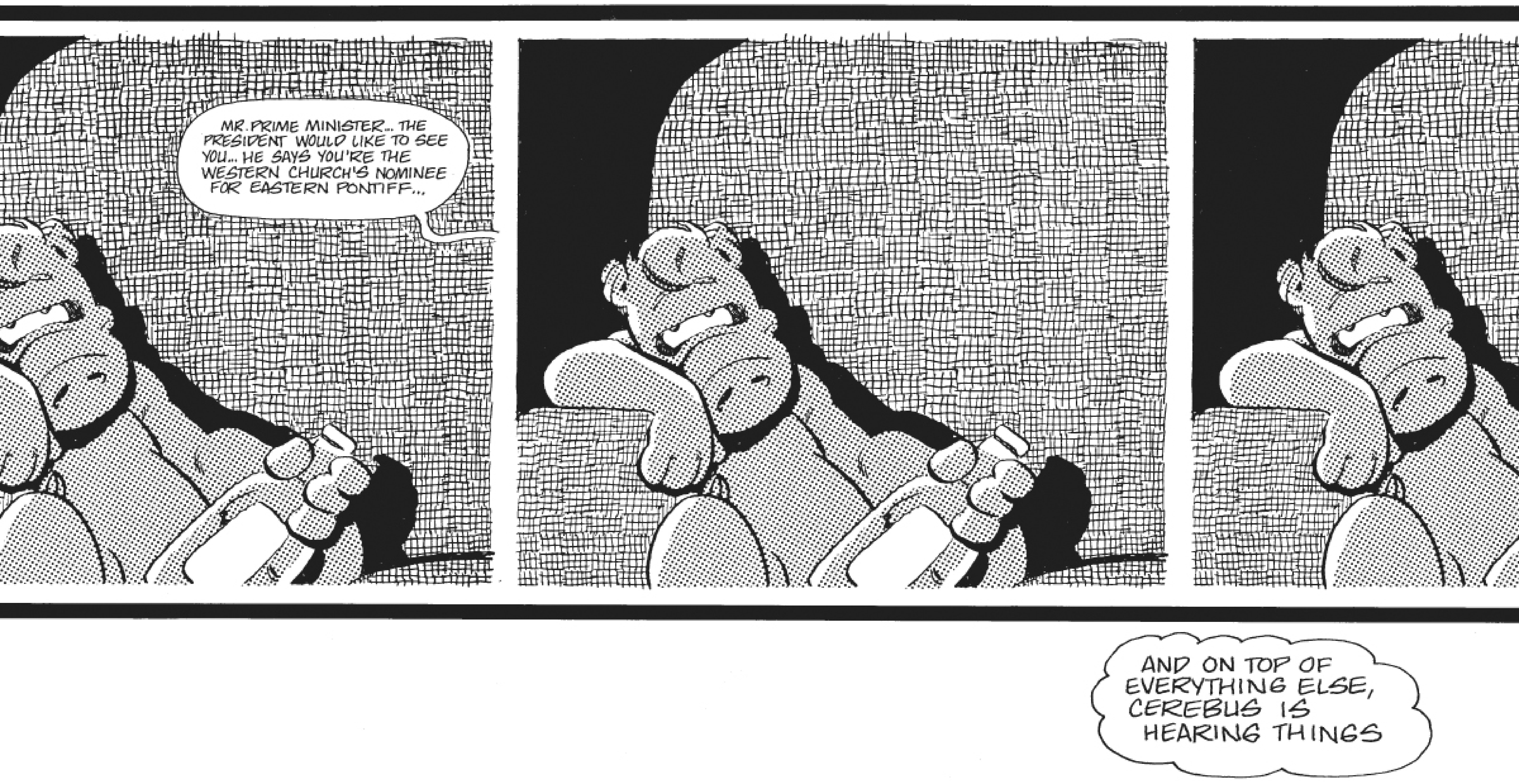



JUST ONE MORE ...
THEN CEREBUS WILL HAVE A CLEAR HEAD TO GO WITH HIS STEADY NERVES.
THEN CEREBUS CAN MAKE SOME PLANS.
CEREBUS CAN'T MAKE PLANS WHEN CEREBUS' HEAD HURTS...
TRUE.
CEREBUS WILL JUST DRINK UNTIL HIS HEAD DOESN'T HURT ANYMORE AND STOP.
GULP GULP
GOOD.
GOOD.


GULP GULP GULP GULP GULP GULP GULP GULP GULP GULP GULP GULP
SUCK SUCK SUCK
SUCK
OH NO.




EMPTY.
ALONE.
AND CEREBUS' HEAD WAS JUST ABOUT TO STOP HURTING
ANOTHER BOTTLE
NO.
CEREBUS' GUT HURTS TOO MUCH...
CEREBUS' EYES HURT ...
CEREBUS' LEG IS ASLEEP
CEREBUS CAN'T SEE STRAIGHT...

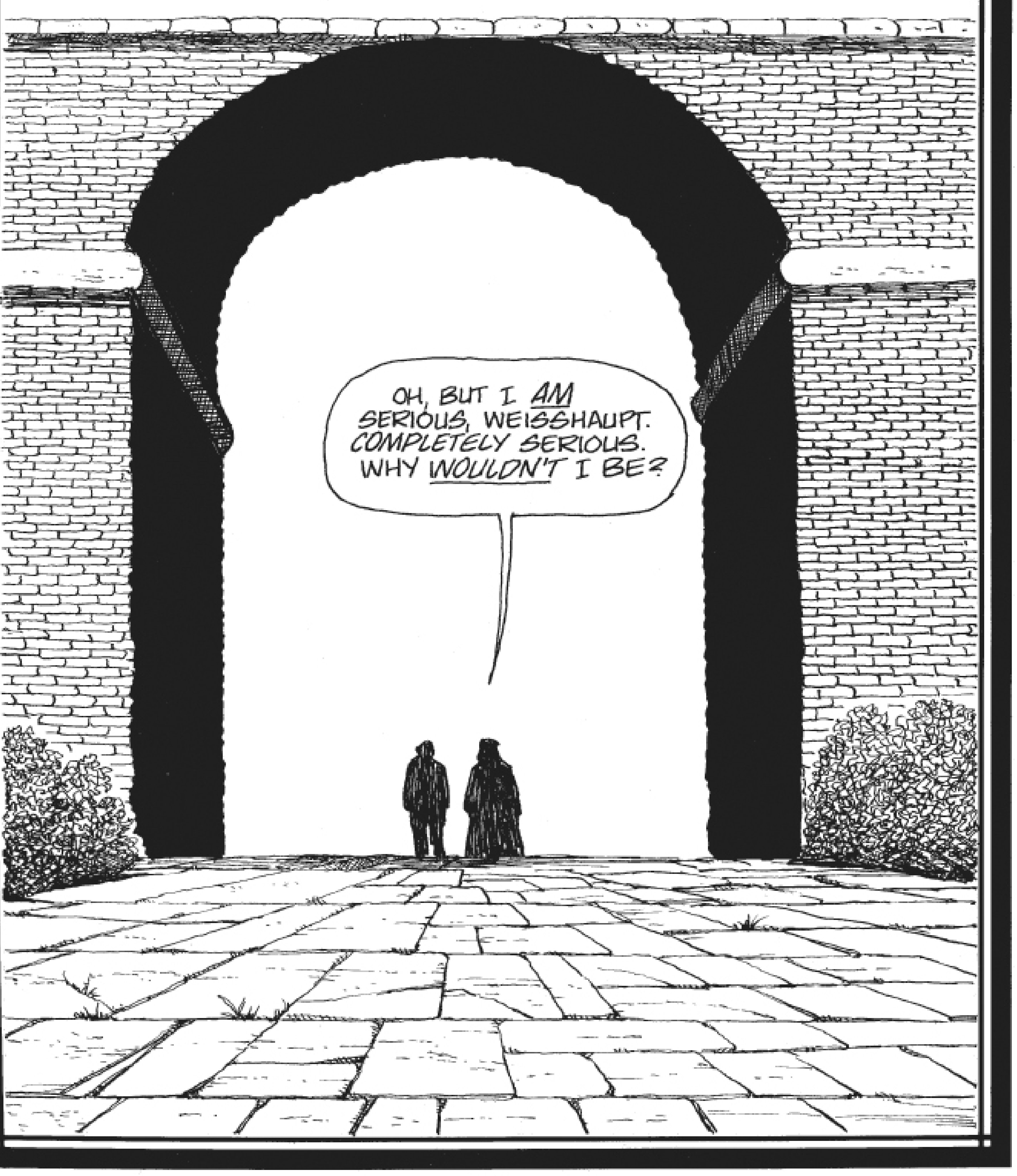

MR. PRIME MINISTER... THE PRESIDENT WOULD LIKE TO SEE YOU... HE SAYS YOU'RE THE WESTERN CHURCH'S NOMINEE FOR EASTERN PONTIFF...
AND ON TOP OF EVERYTHING ELSE, CEREBUS IS HEARING THINGS

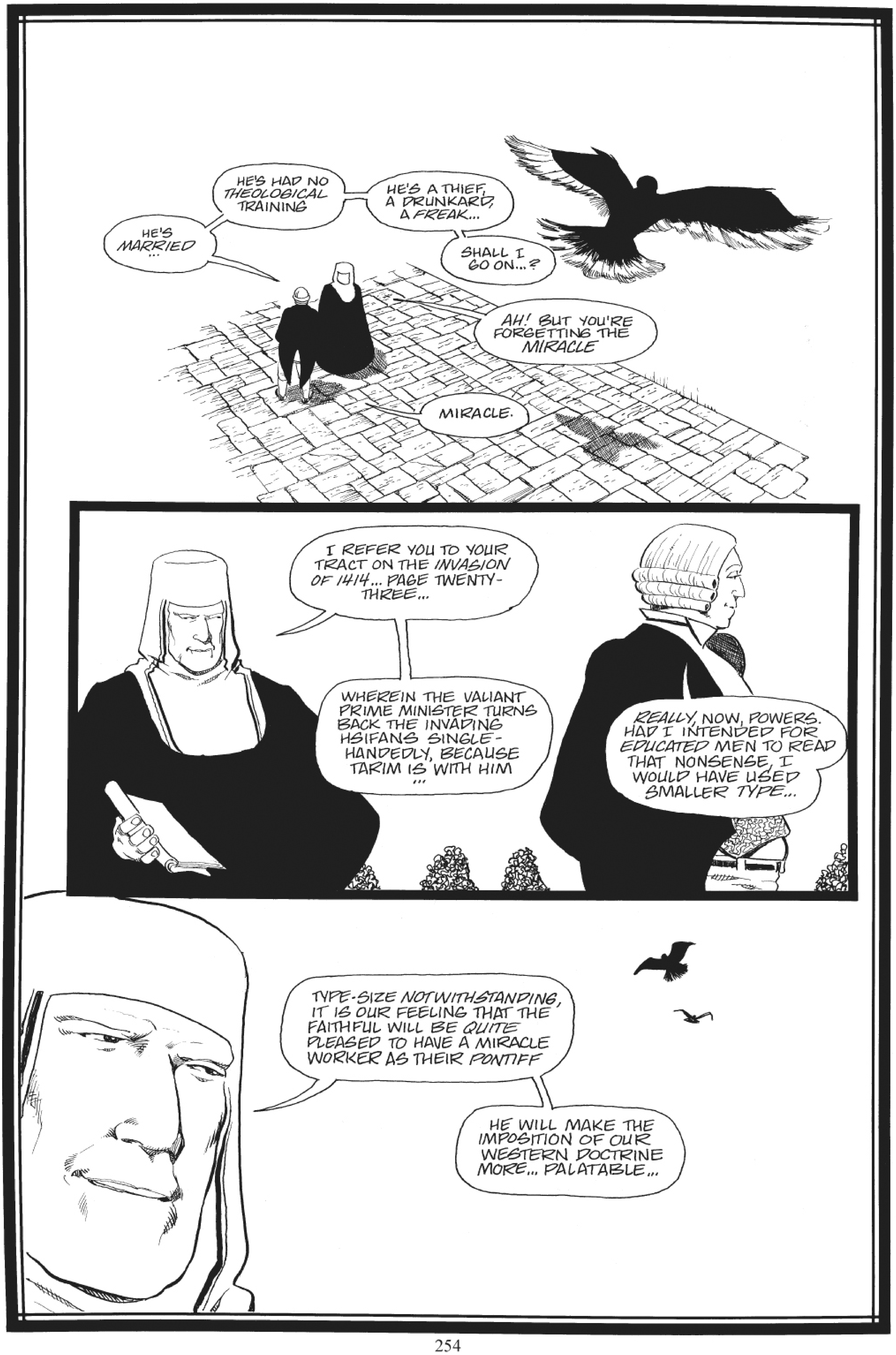
III

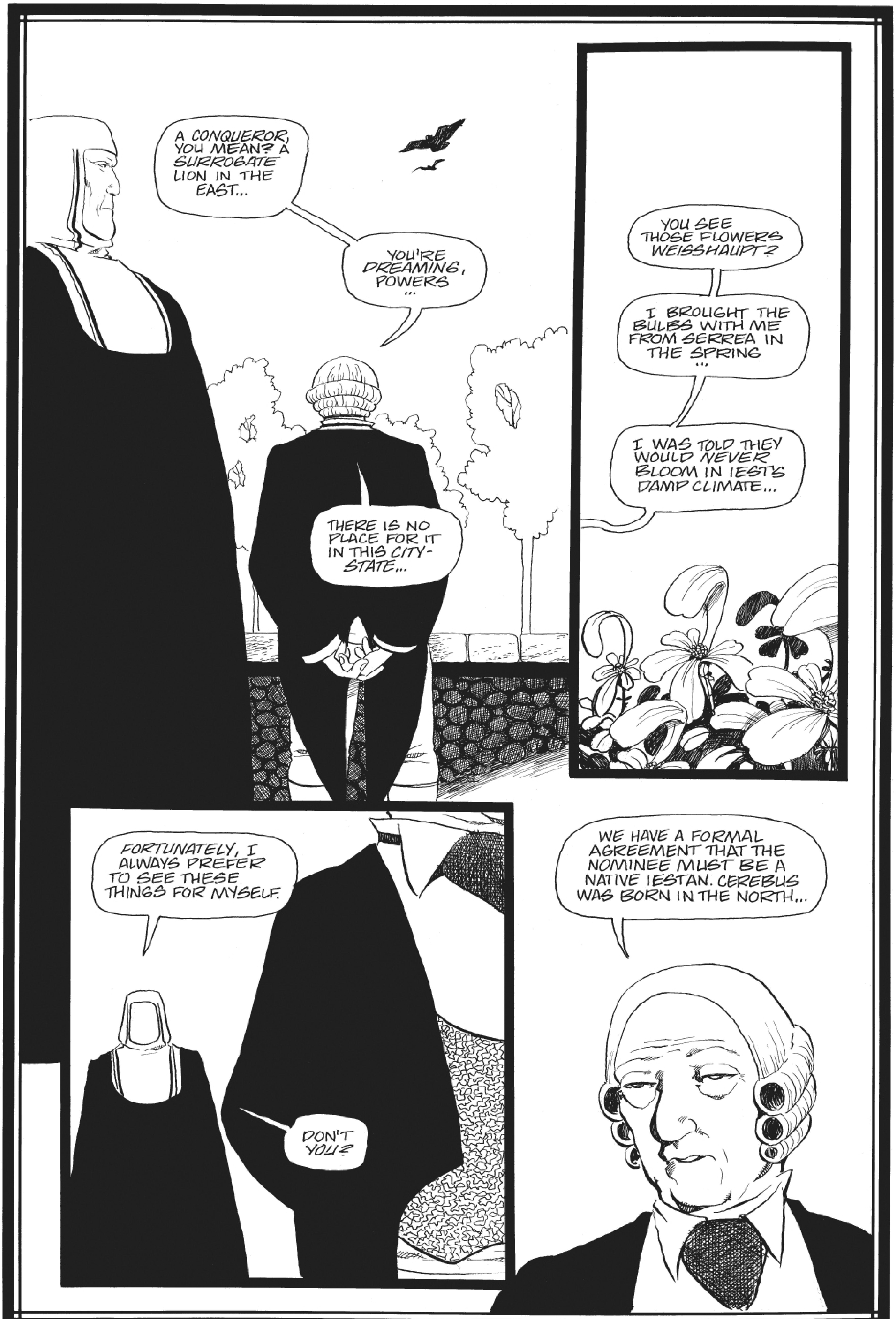
BOOK THREE

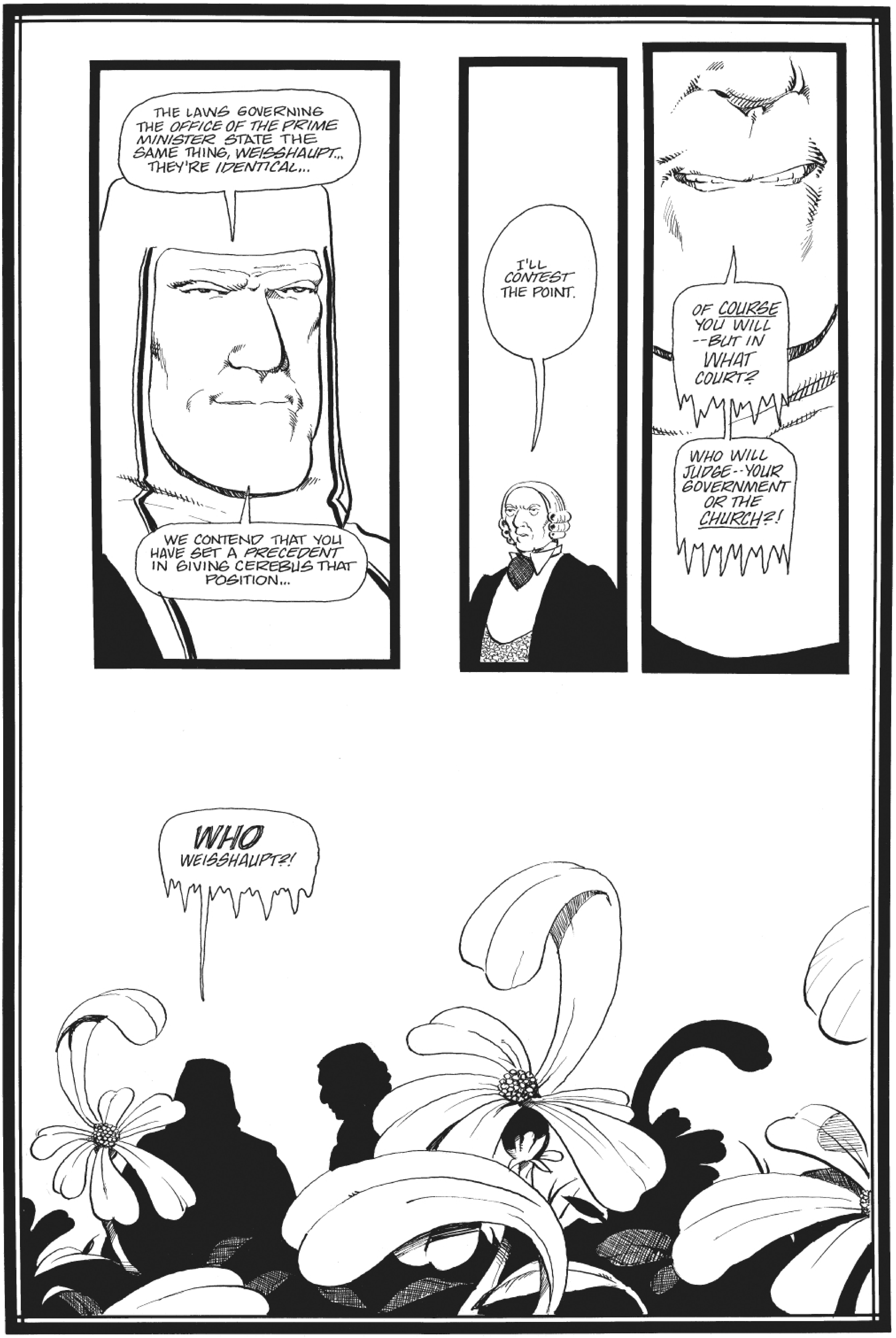
Church and State

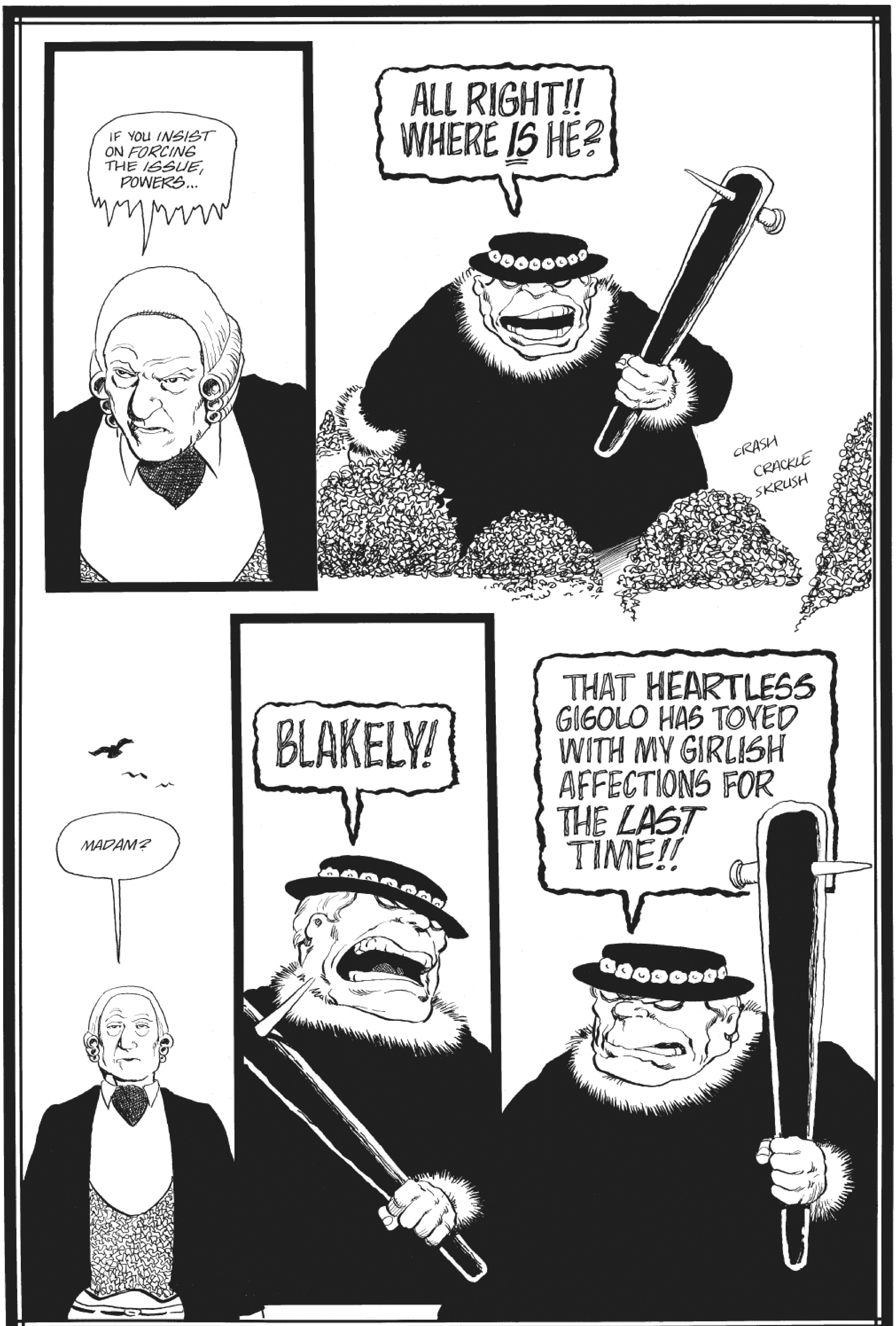
NEVER PRAY FOR CHANGE

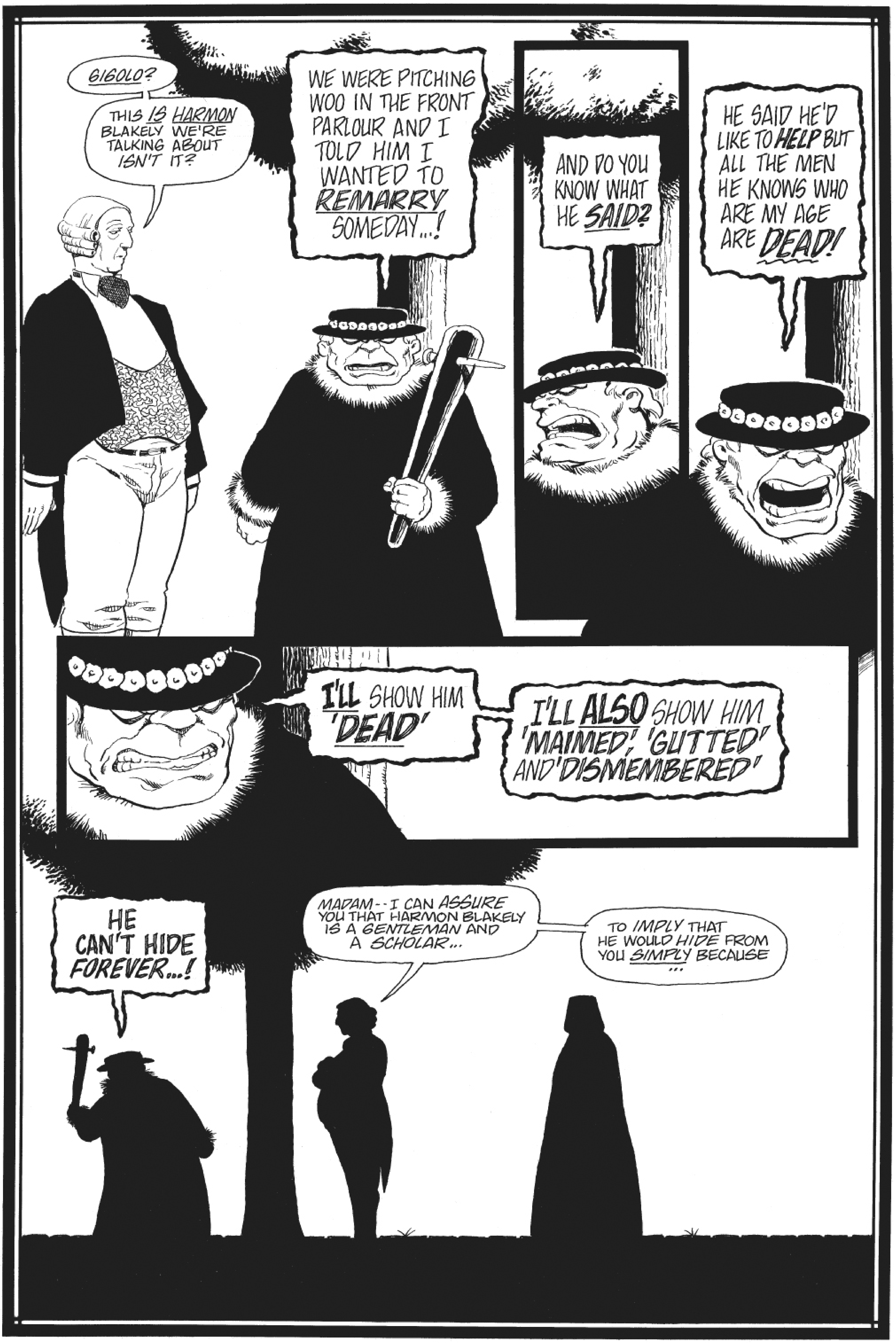

OH, BUT I *AM* SERIOUS, WEISSHAUPT. COMPLETELY SERIOUS. WHY *WOULDN'T* I BE?

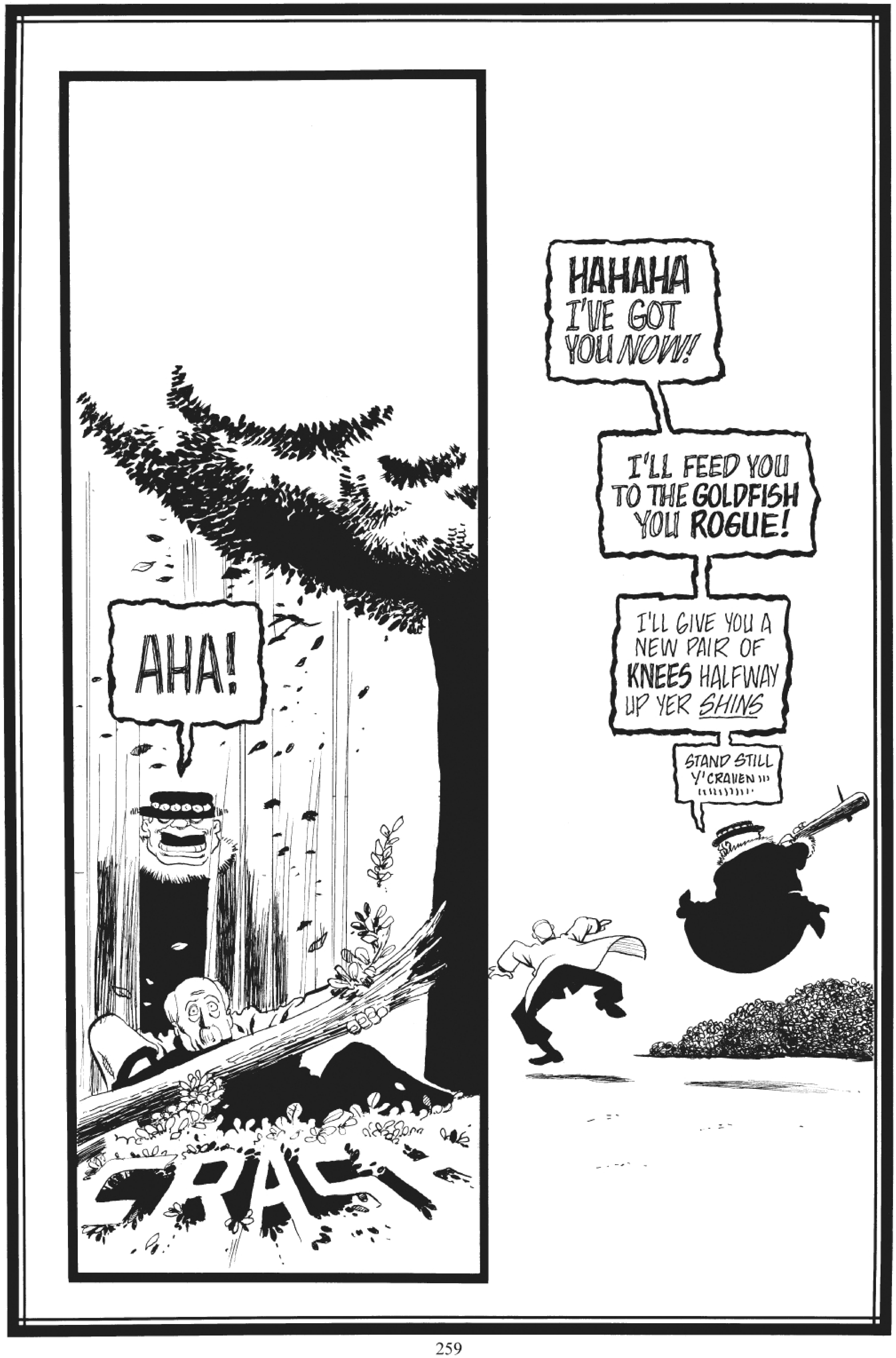

HE'S MARRIED ...
HE'S HAD NO THEOLOGICAL TRAINING
HE'S A THIEF, A DRUNKARD, A FREAK...
SHALL I GO ON...?
AH! BUT YOU'RE FORGETTING THE MIRACLE
MIRACLE.
I REFER YOU TO YOUR TRACT ON THE INVASION OF 1414... PAGE TWENTY-THREE...
WHEREIN THE VALIANT PRIME MINISTER TURNS BACK THE INVADING HSIFANS SINGLE-HANDEDLY, BECAUSE TARIM IS WITH HIM ...
REALLY, NOW, POWERS. HAD I INTENDED FOR EDUCATED MEN TO READ THAT NONSENSE, I WOULD HAVE USED SMALLER TYPE...
TYPE-SIZE NOTWITHSTANDING, IT IS OUR FEELING THAT THE FAITHFUL WILL BE QUITE PLEASED TO HAVE A MIRACLE WORKER AS THEIR PONTIFF
HE WILL MAKE THE IMPOSITION OF OUR WESTERN DOCTRINE MORE... PALATABLE...

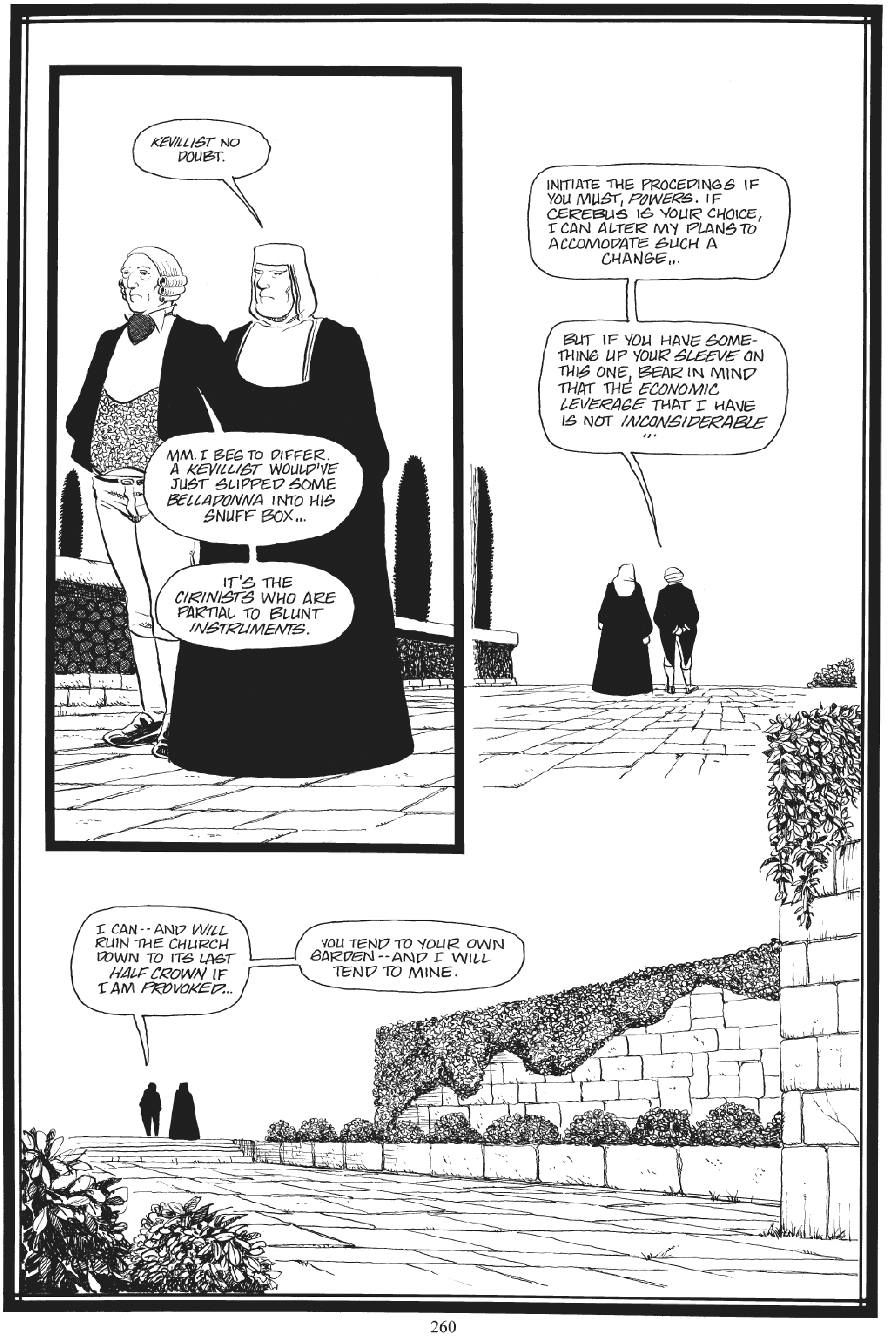

A CONQUEROR, YOU MEAN? A SURROGATE LION IN THE EAST...
YOU'RE DREAMING, POWERS ...
THERE IS NO PLACE FOR IT IN THIS CITY-STATE...
YOU SEE THOSE FLOWERS WEISSHAUPT?
I BROUGHT THE BULBS WITH ME FROM SERREA IN THE SPRING ...
I WAS TOLD THEY WOULD NEVER BLOOM IN IEST'S DAMP CLIMATE...
FORTUNATELY, I ALWAYS PREFER TO SEE THESE THINGS FOR MYSELF.
DON'T YOU?
WE HAVE A FORMAL AGREEMENT THAT THE NOMINEE MUST BE A NATIVE IESTAN. CEREBUS WAS BORN IN THE NORTH...

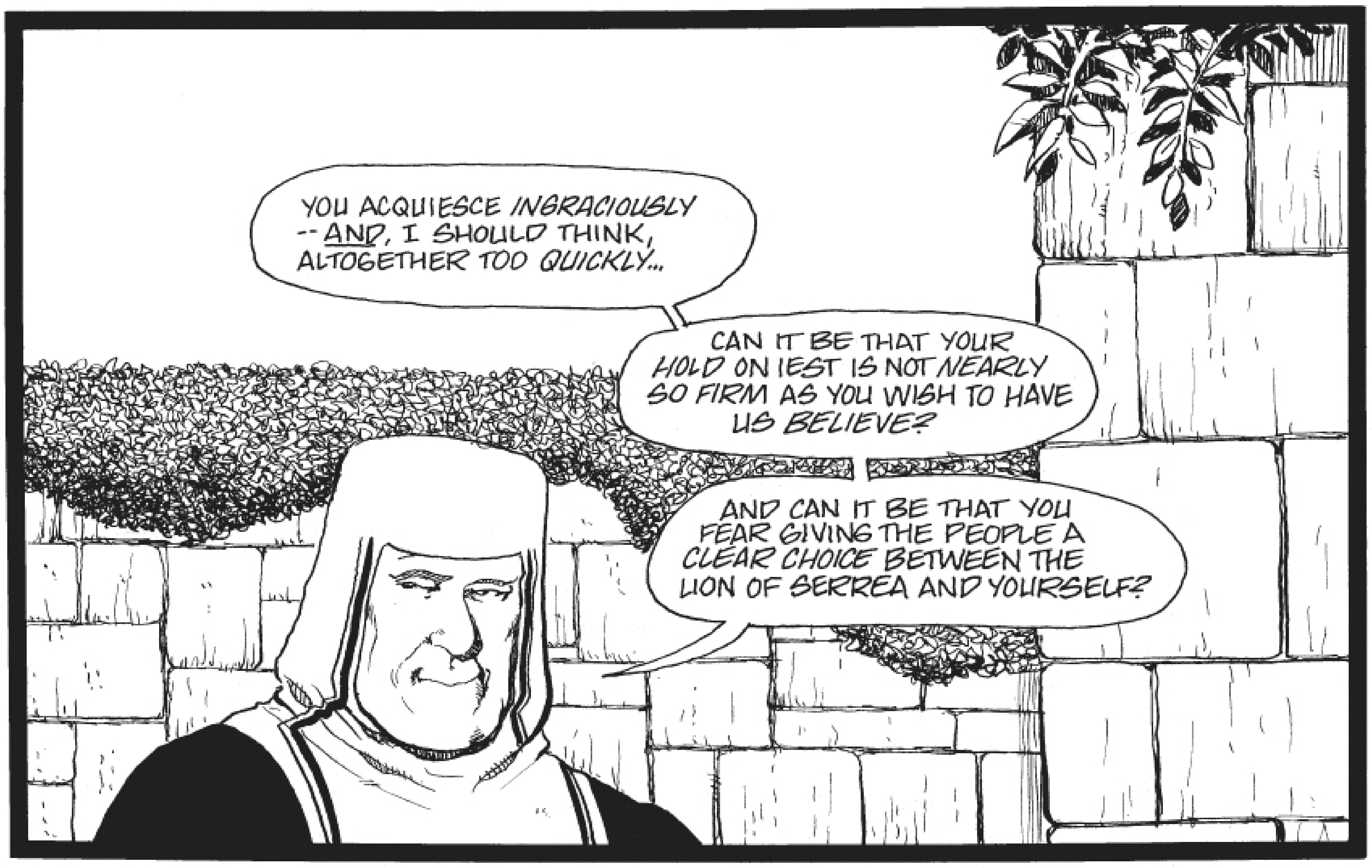

THE LAWS GOVERNING THE OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER STATE THE SAME THING, WEISSHAUPT... THEY'RE IDENTICAL...
WE CONTEND THAT YOU HAVE SET A PRECEDENT IN GIVING CEREBUS THAT POSITION...
I'LL CONTEST THE POINT.
OF COURSE YOU WILL --BUT IN WHAT COURT?
WHO WILL JUDGE--YOUR GOVERNMENT OR THE CHURCH?!
WHO WEISSHAUPT?!

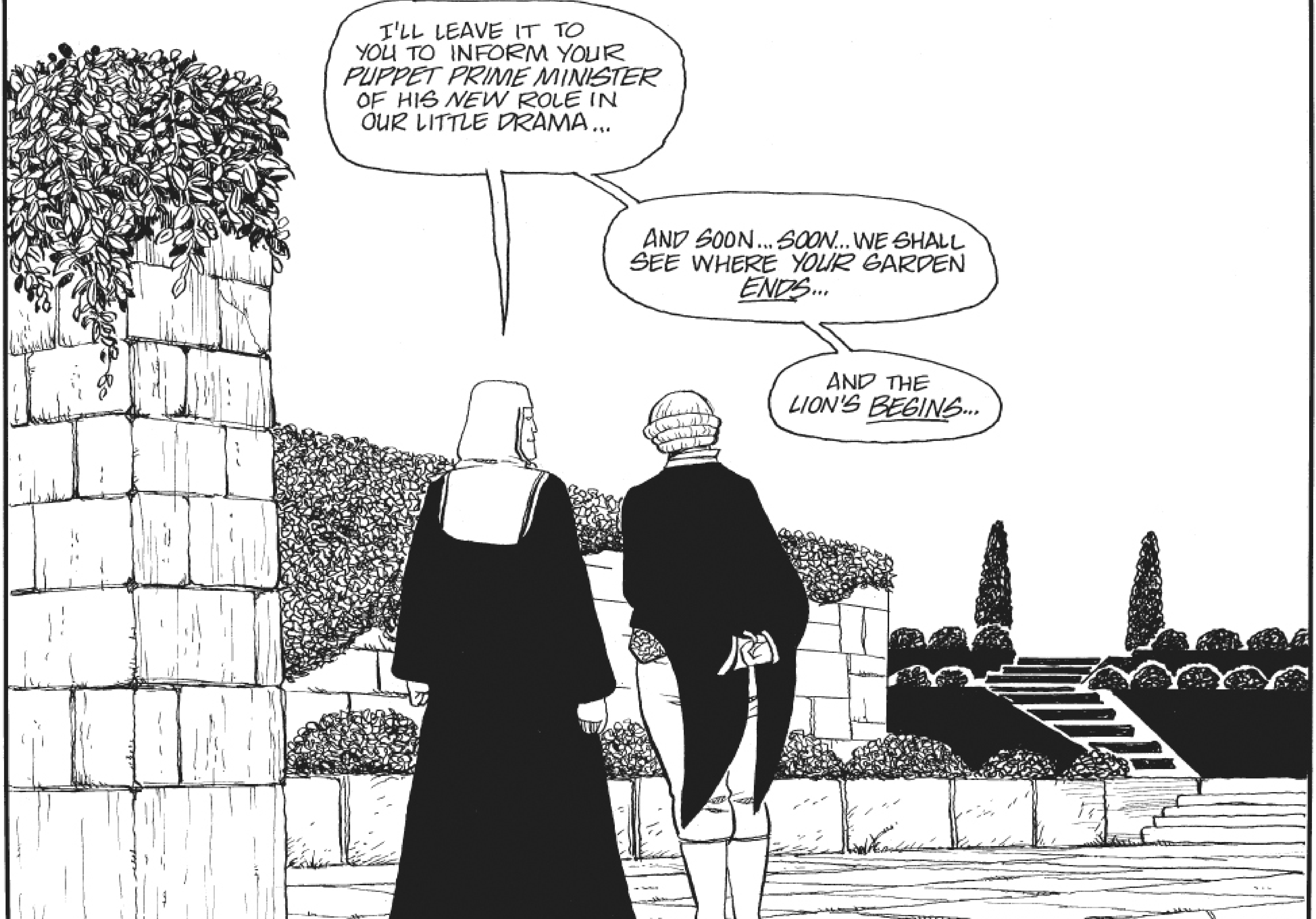

IF YOU *INSIST* ON *FORCING* THE *ISSUE*, POWERS...
ALL RIGHT!! WHERE *IS* HE?
CRASH
CRACKLE
SKRUSH
MADAM?
BLAKELY!
THAT **HEARTLESS** GIGOLO HAS TOYED WITH MY GIRLISH AFFECTIONS FOR **THE *LAST*** TIME!!

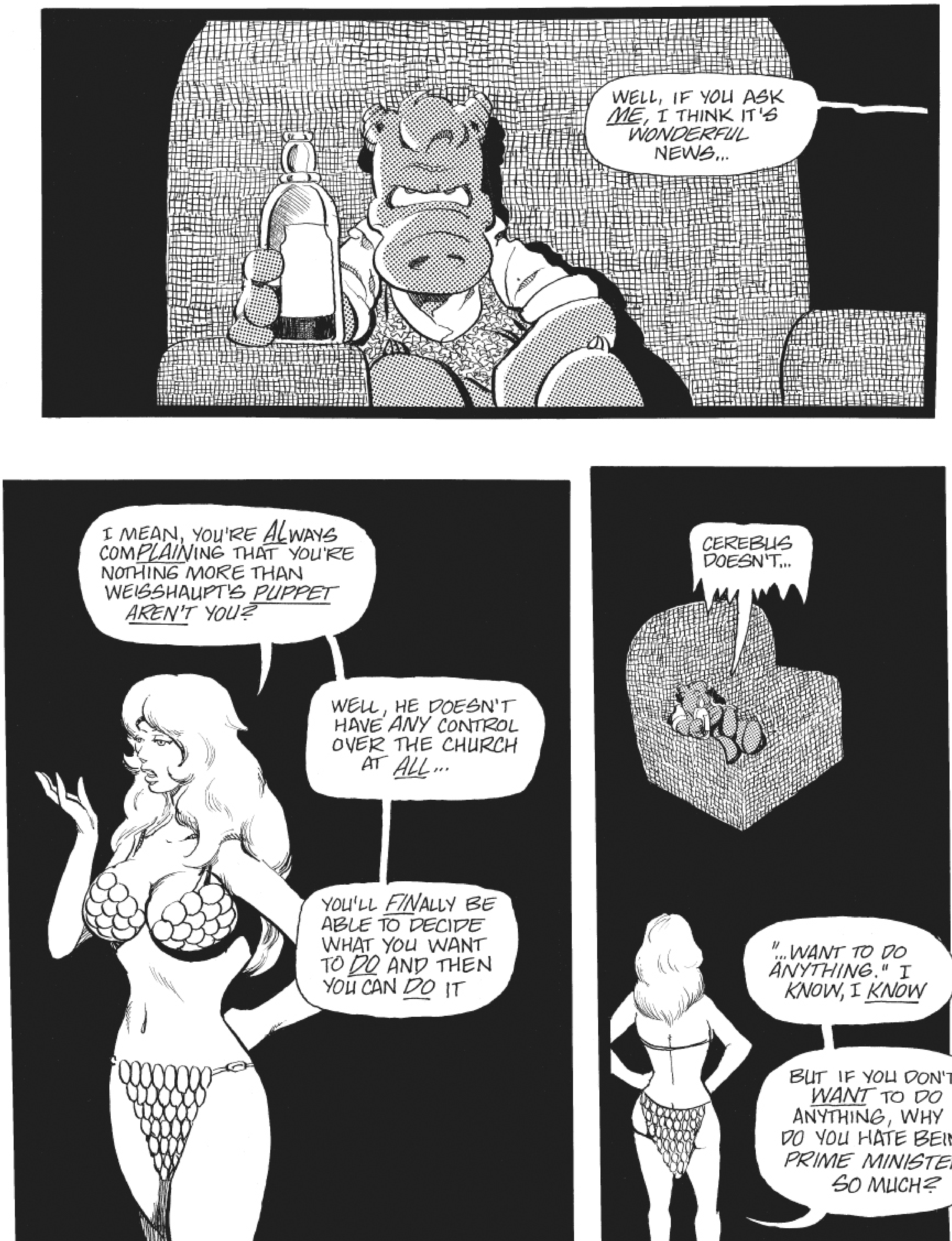

GIGOLO?
THIS IS HARMON BLAKELY WE'RE TALKING ABOUT ISN'T IT?
WE WERE PITCHING WOO IN THE FRONT PARLOUR AND I TOLD HIM I WANTED TO REMARRY SOMEDAY...!
AND DO YOU KNOW WHAT HE SAID?
HE SAID HE'D LIKE TO HELP BUT ALL THE MEN HE KNOWS WHO ARE MY AGE ARE DEAD!
I'LL SHOW HIM 'DEAD'
I'LL ALSO SHOW HIM 'MAIMED', 'GUTTED' AND 'DISMEMBERED'
HE CAN'T HIDE FOREVER...!
MADAM--I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT HARMON BLAKELY IS A GENTLEMAN AND A SCHOLAR...
TO IMPLY THAT HE WOULD HIDE FROM YOU SIMPLY BECAUSE ...

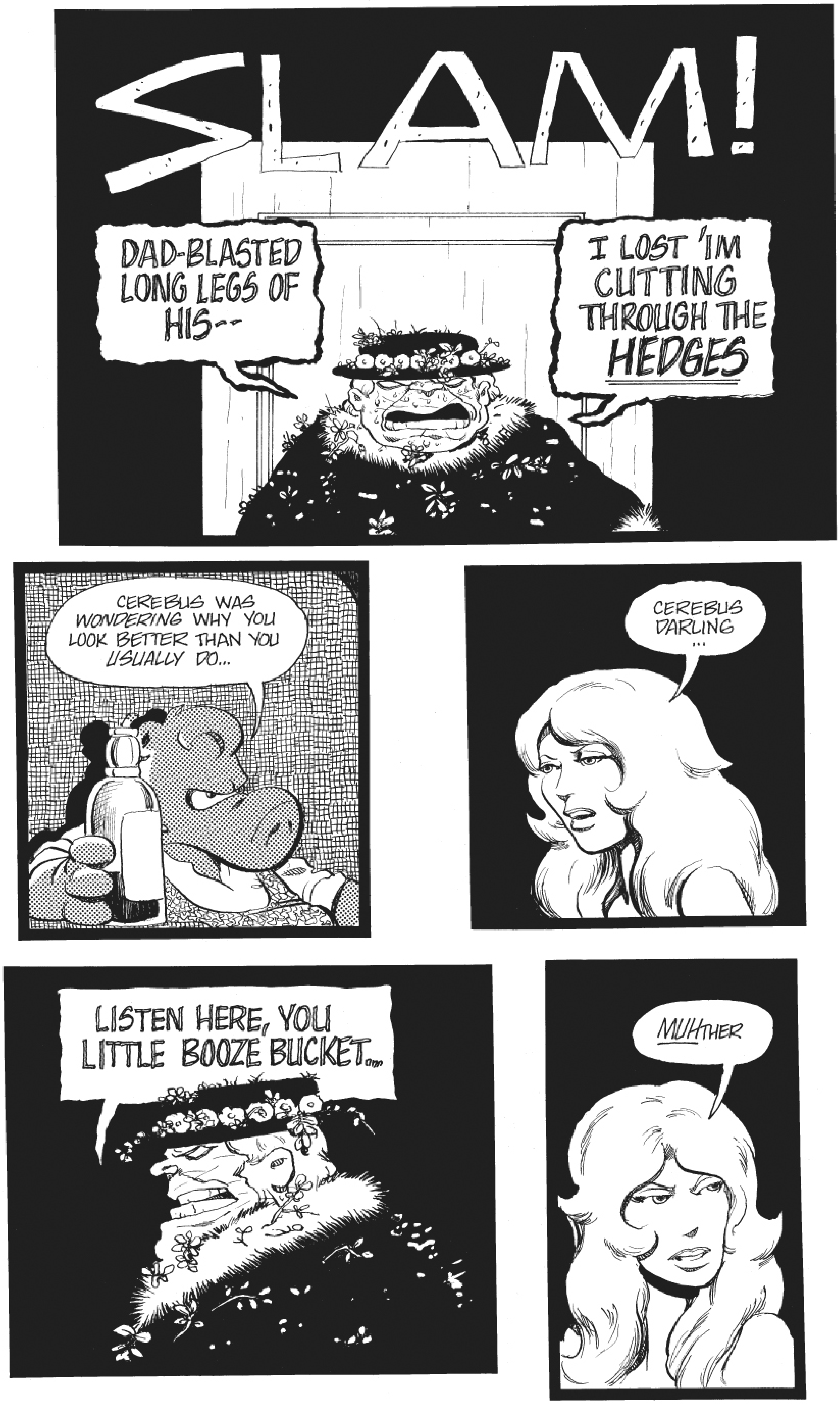

HAHAHA I'VE GOT YOU NOW!
I'LL FEED YOU TO THE GOLDFISH YOU ROGUE!
I'LL GIVE YOU A NEW PAIR OF KNEES HALFWAY UP YER SHINS
STAND STILL Y'CRAVEN
AHA!
CRASH

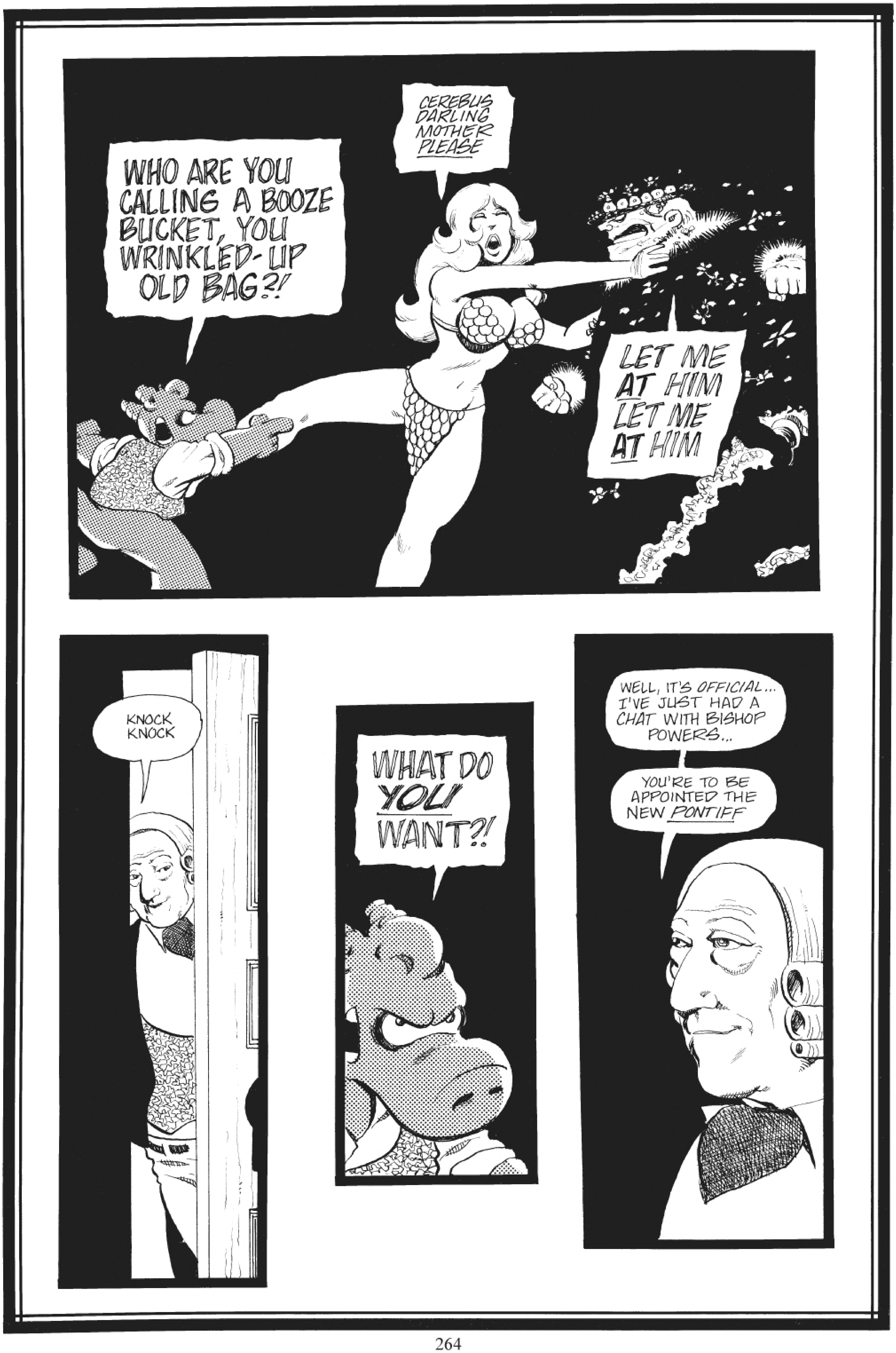

KEVILLIST NO DOUBT.
MM. I BEG TO DIFFER. A KEVILLIST WOULD'VE JUST SLIPPED SOME BELLADONNA INTO HIS SNUFF BOX...
IT'S THE CIRINISTS WHO ARE PARTIAL TO BLUNT INSTRUMENTS.
INITIATE THE PROCEDINGS IF YOU MUST, POWERS. IF CEREBUS IS YOUR CHOICE, I CAN ALTER MY PLANS TO ACCOMODATE SUCH A CHANGE...
BUT IF YOU HAVE SOMETHING UP YOUR SLEEVE ON THIS ONE, BEAR IN MIND THAT THE ECONOMIC LEVERAGE THAT I HAVE IS NOT INCONSIDERABLE...
I CAN--AND WILL RUIN THE CHURCH DOWN TO ITS LAST HALF CROWN IF I AM PROVOKED...
YOU TEND TO YOUR OWN GARDEN--AND I WILL TEND TO MINE.

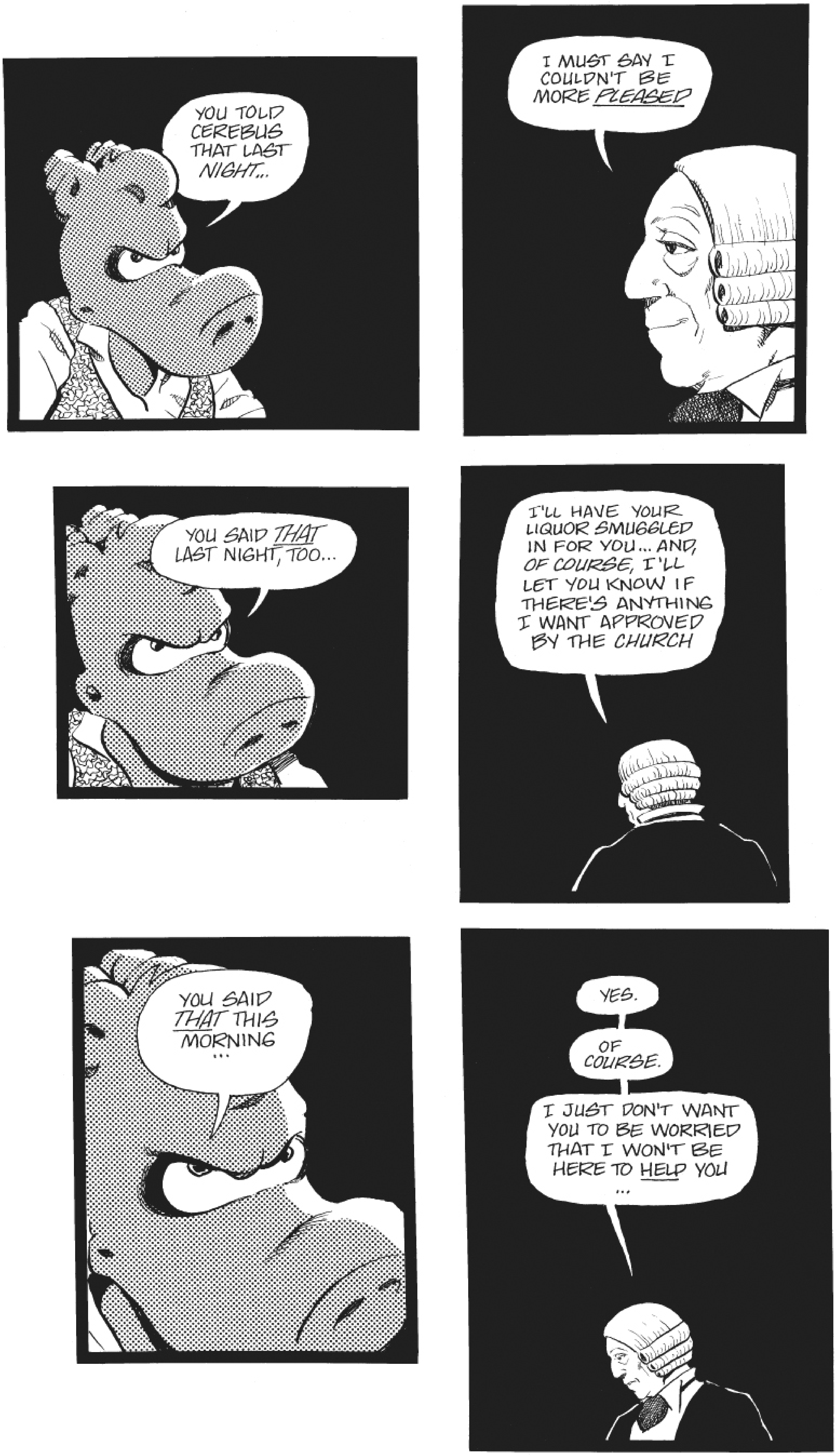

YOU ACQUIESCE INGRACIOUSLY -- AND, I SHOULD THINK, ALTOGETHER TOO QUICKLY...
CAN IT BE THAT YOUR HOLD ON IEST IS NOT NEARLY SO FIRM AS YOU WISH TO HAVE US BELIEVE?
AND CAN IT BE THAT YOU FEAR GIVING THE PEOPLE A CLEAR CHOICE BETWEEN THE LION OF SERREA AND YOURSELF?

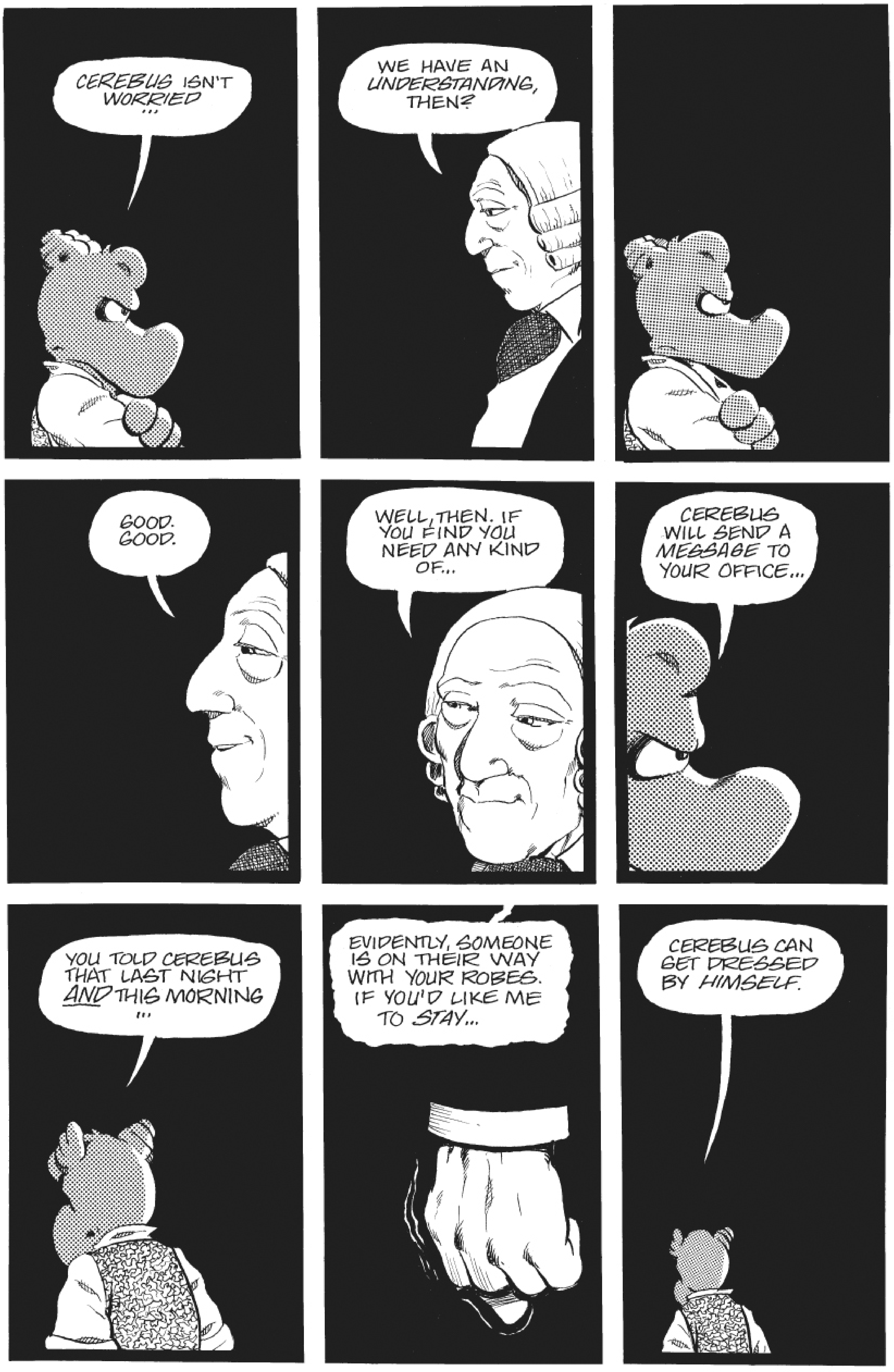

I'LL LEAVE IT TO YOU TO INFORM YOUR PUPPET PRIME MINISTER OF HIS NEW ROLE IN OUR LITTLE DRAMA...
AND SOON... SOON... WE SHALL SEE WHERE YOUR GARDEN ENDS...
AND THE LION'S BEGINS...

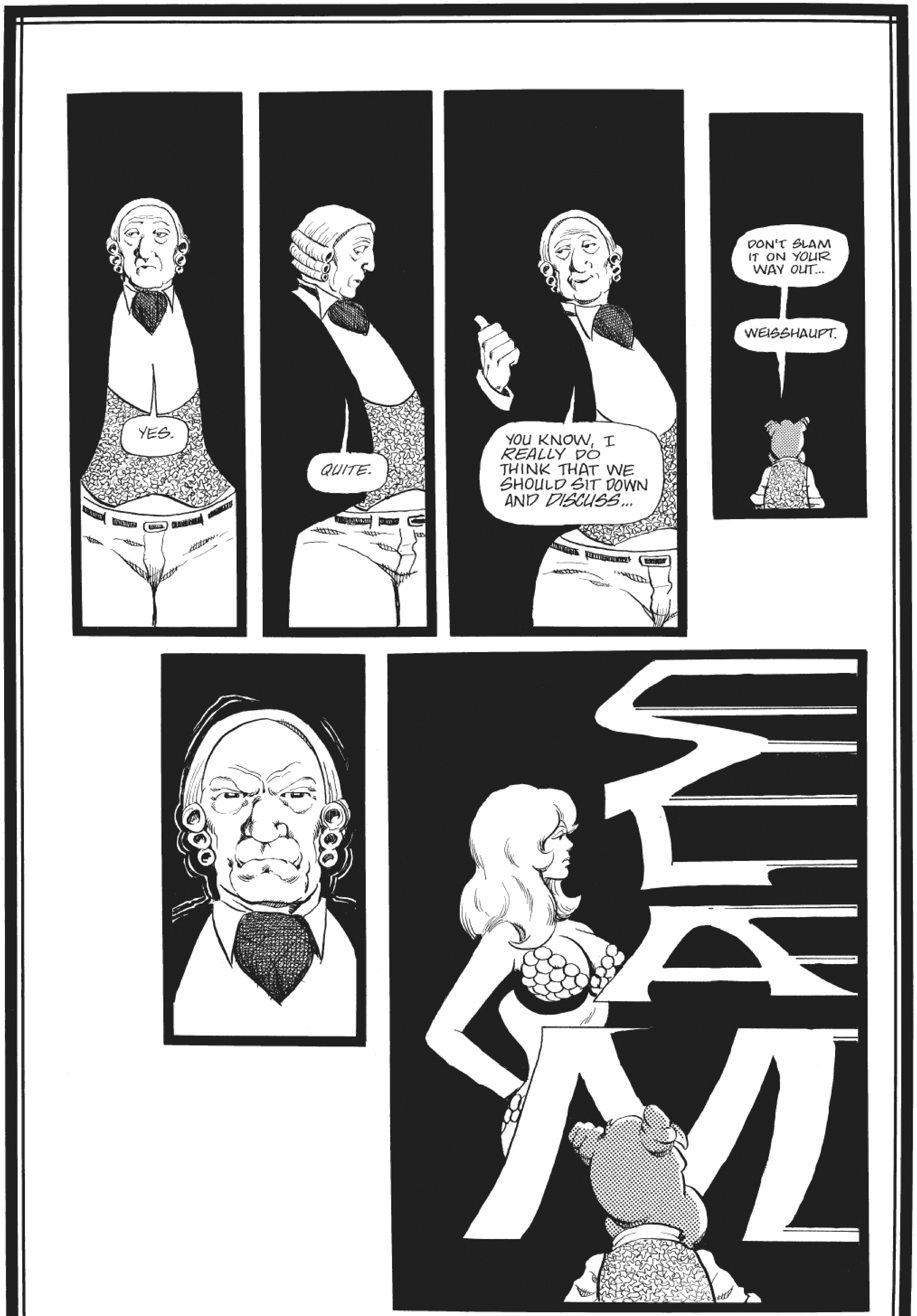

WELL, IF YOU ASK *ME*, I THINK IT'S *WONDERFUL* NEWS...
I MEAN, YOU'RE *AL*WAYS COM*PLAIN*ING THAT YOU'RE NOTHING MORE THAN WEISSHAUPT'S *PUPPET* *AREN'T* YOU?
WELL, HE DOESN'T HAVE *ANY* CONTROL OVER THE CHURCH AT *ALL*...
YOU'LL *FIN*ALLY BE ABLE TO DECIDE WHAT YOU WANT TO *DO* AND THEN YOU CAN *DO* IT
CEREBUS DOESN'T...
"...WANT TO DO *ANYTHING*." I KNOW, I *KNOW*
BUT IF YOU DON'T *WANT* TO DO ANYTHING, WHY DO YOU HATE BEING *PRIME MINISTER* SO MUCH?

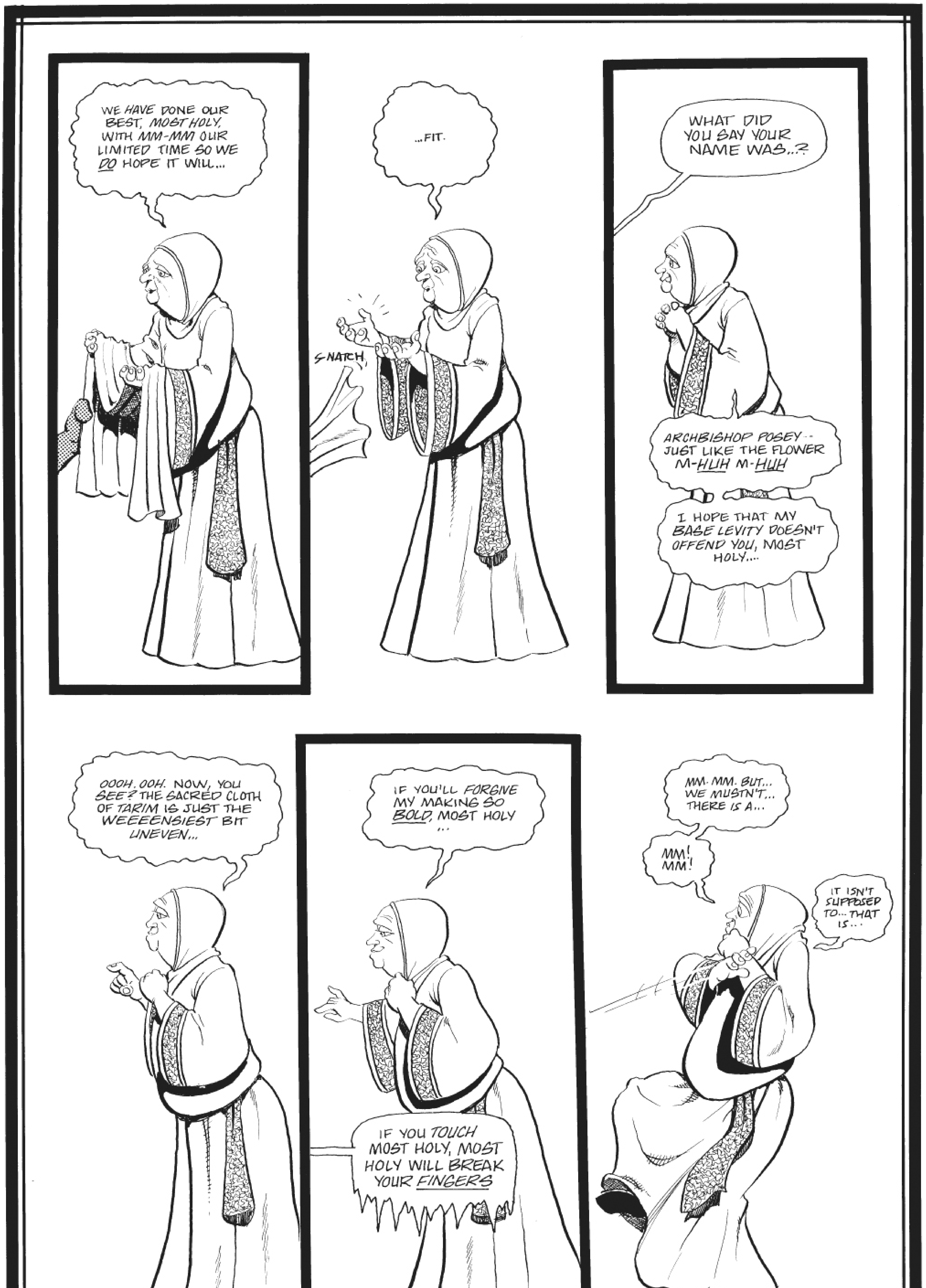

SLAM!
DAD-BLASTED LONG LEGS OF HIS--
I LOST 'IM CUTTING THROUGH THE HEDGES
CEREBUS WAS WONDERING WHY YOU LOOK BETTER THAN YOU USUALLY DO...
CEREBUS DARLING ...
LISTEN HERE, YOU LITTLE BOOZE BUCKET...
MUHTHER

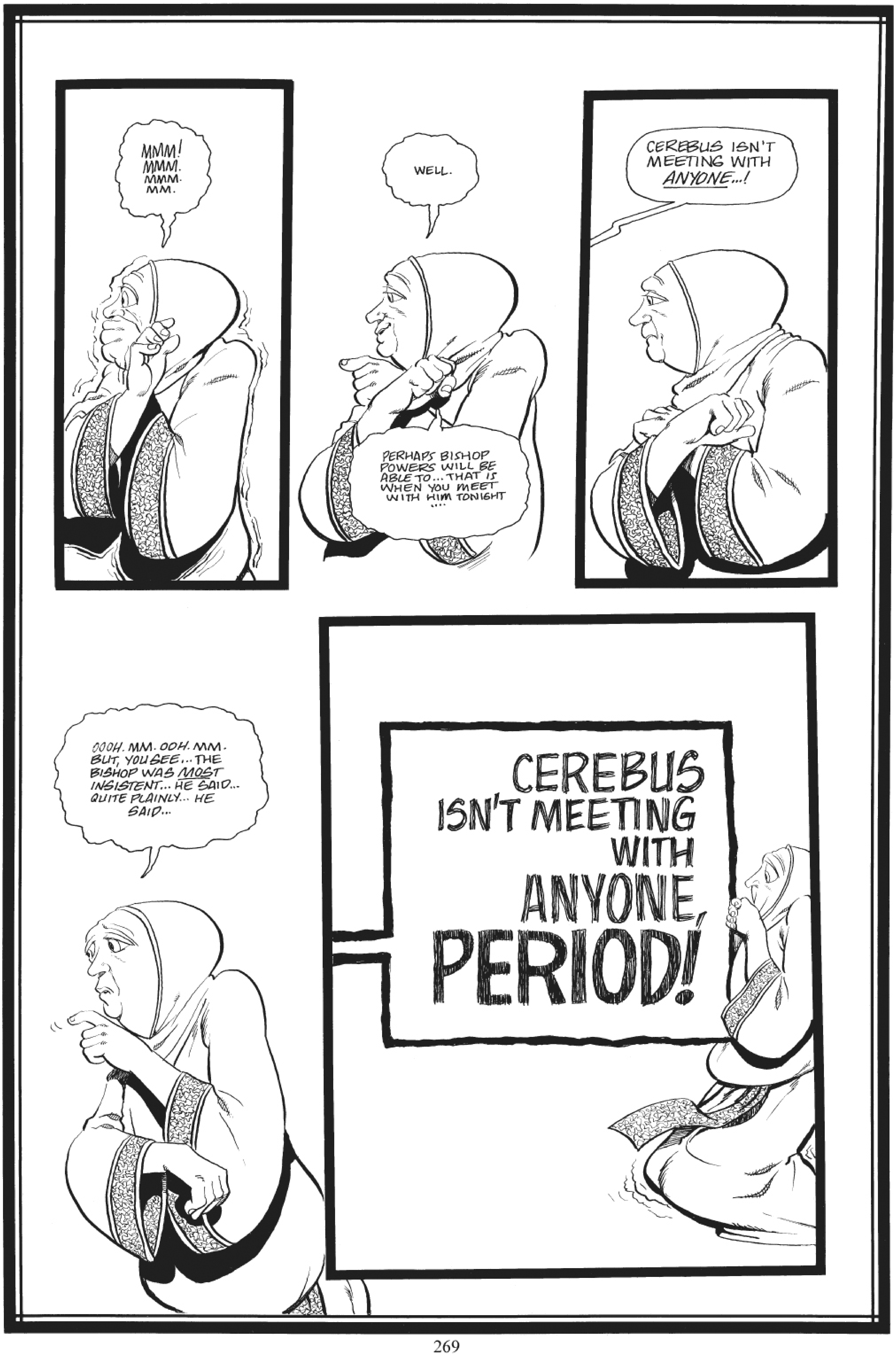

WHO ARE YOU CALLING A BOOZE BUCKET, YOU WRINKLED-UP OLD BAG?!
CEREBUS DARLING MOTHER *PLEASE*
LET ME *AT* HIM LET ME *AT* HIM
KNOCK KNOCK
WHAT DO *YOU* WANT?!
WELL, IT'S *OFFICIAL*... I'VE JUST HAD A CHAT WITH BISHOP POWERS...
YOU'RE TO BE APPOINTED THE NEW *PONTIFF*

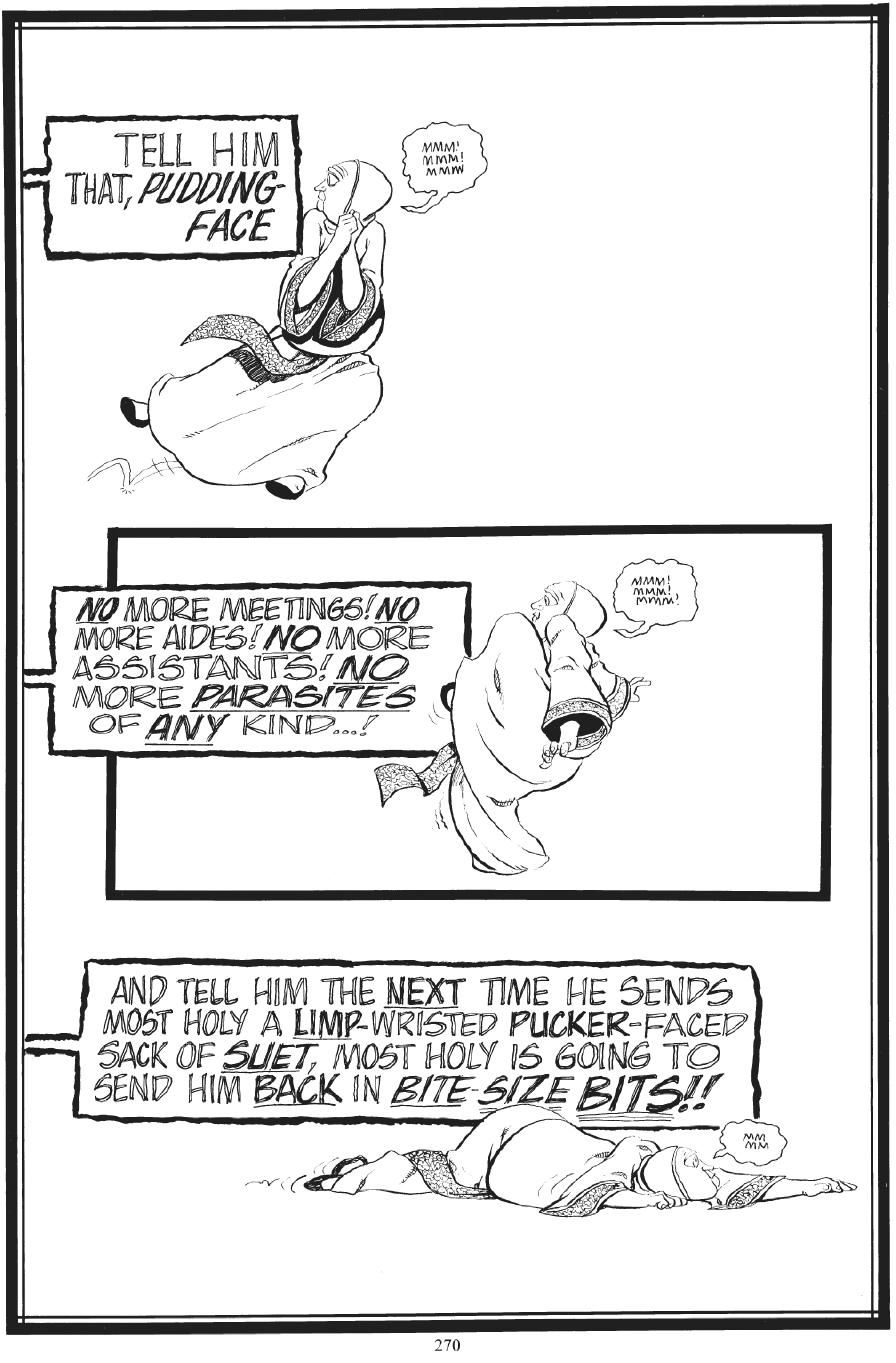

YOU TOLD CEREBUS THAT LAST *NIGHT*...
I MUST SAY I COULDN'T BE MORE *PLEASED*
YOU SAID *THAT* LAST NIGHT, TOO...
I'LL HAVE YOUR LIQUOR SMUGGLED IN FOR YOU... AND, *OF COURSE*, I'LL LET YOU KNOW IF THERE'S ANYTHING I WANT APPROVED BY THE *CHURCH*
YOU SAID *THAT* THIS MORNING ...
YES.
OF COURSE.
I JUST DON'T WANT YOU TO BE WORRIED THAT I WON'T BE HERE TO HELP YOU ...

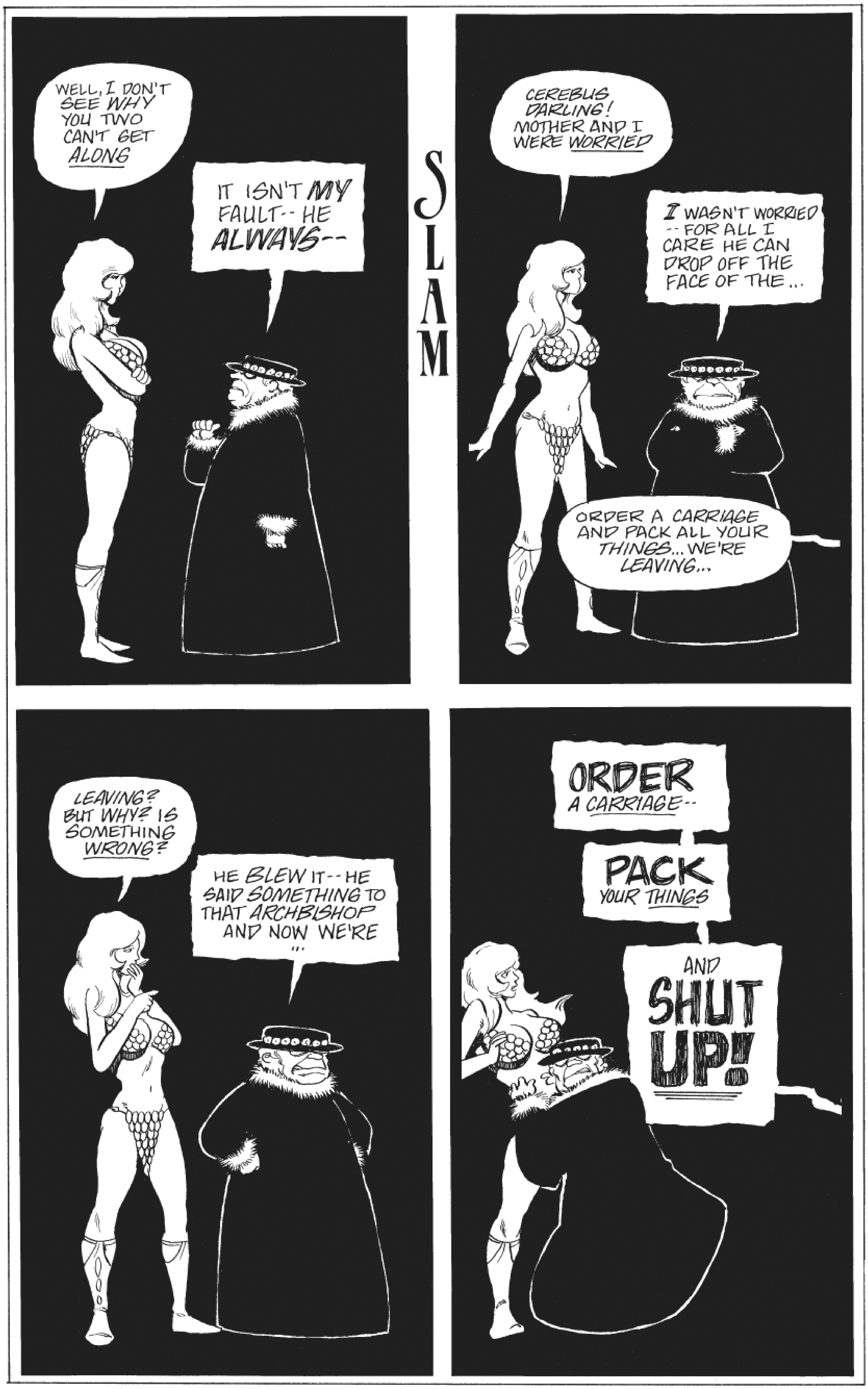

CEREBUS ISN'T WORRIED ...
WE HAVE AN UNDERSTANDING, THEN?
GOOD. GOOD.
WELL, THEN. IF YOU FIND YOU NEED ANY KIND OF...
CEREBUS WILL SEND A MESSAGE TO YOUR OFFICE...
YOU TOLD CEREBUS THAT LAST NIGHT AND THIS MORNING ...
EVIDENTLY, SOMEONE IS ON THEIR WAY WITH YOUR ROBES. IF YOU'D LIKE ME TO STAY...
CEREBUS CAN GET DRESSED BY HIMSELF.

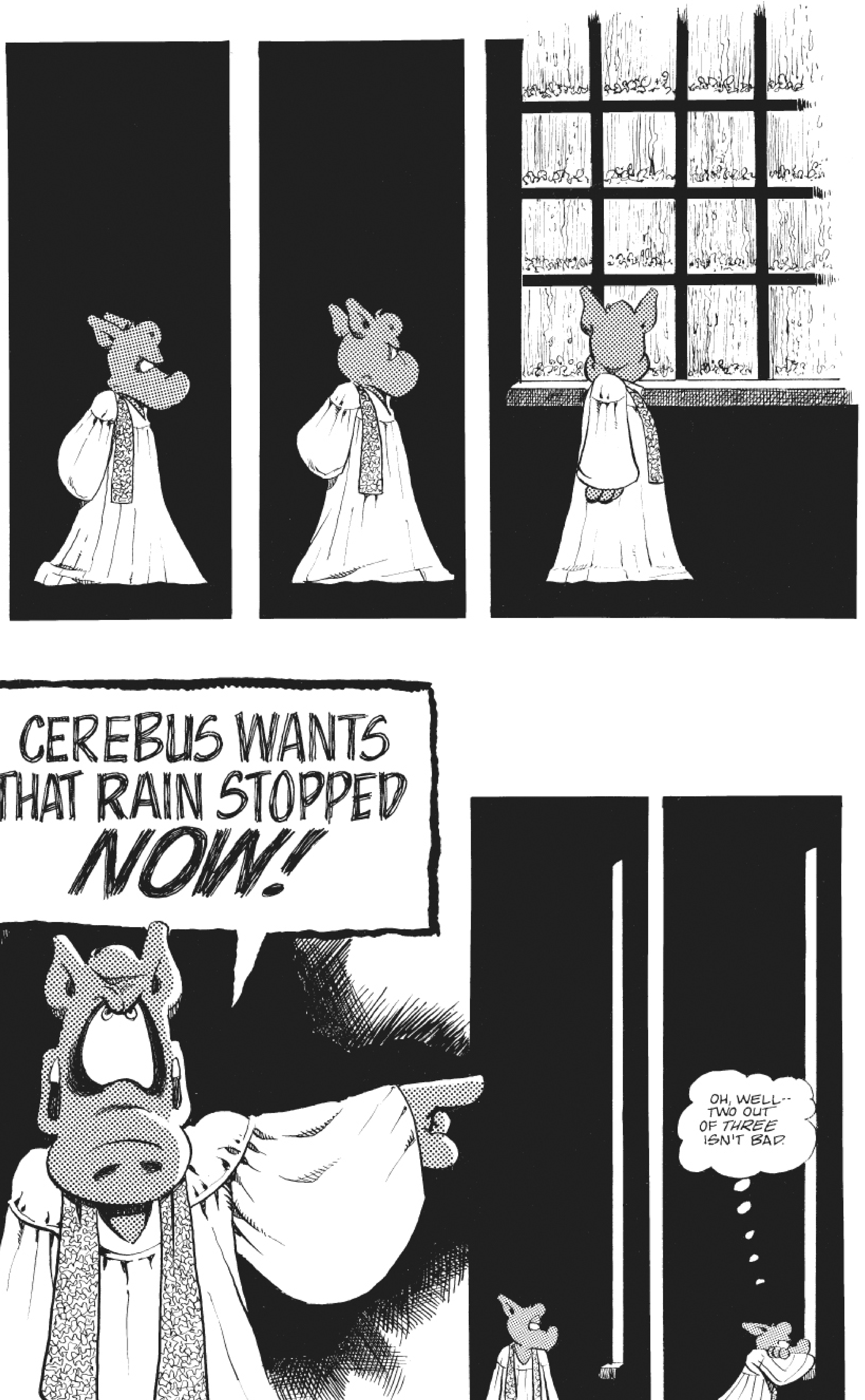

YES.
QUITE.
YOU KNOW, I REALLY DO THINK THAT WE SHOULD SIT DOWN AND DISCUSS...
DON'T SLAM IT ON YOUR WAY OUT...
WEISSHAUPT.
SLAM

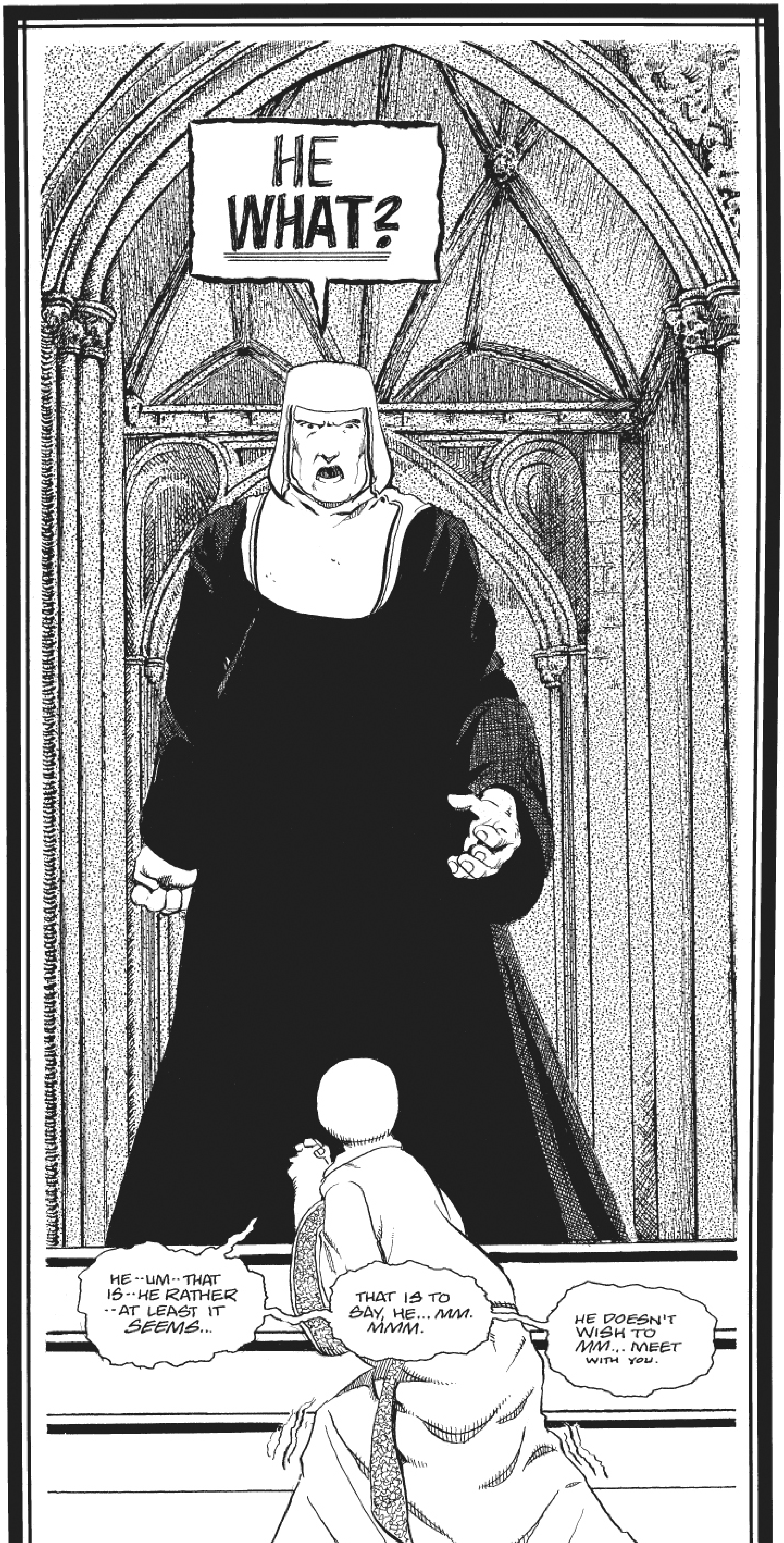

WE HAVE DONE OUR BEST, MOST HOLY, WITH MM-MM OUR LIMITED TIME SO WE DO HOPE IT WILL...
...FIT.
S-NATCH
WHAT DID YOU SAY YOUR NAME WAS..?
ARCHBISHOP POSEY.. JUST LIKE THE FLOWER M-HUH M-HUH
I HOPE THAT MY BASE LEVITY DOESN'T OFFEND YOU, MOST HOLY....
OOOH. OOH. NOW, YOU SEE? THE SACRED CLOTH OF TARIM IS JUST THE WEEEENSIEST BIT UNEVEN...
IF YOU'LL FORGIVE MY MAKING SO BOLD, MOST HOLY ...
IF YOU TOUCH MOST HOLY, MOST HOLY WILL BREAK YOUR FINGERS
MM. MM. BUT... WE MUSTN'T... THERE IS A...
MM! MM!
IT ISN'T SUPPOSED TO... THAT IS...


MMM! MMM. MMM. MM.
WELL.
PERHAPS BISHOP POWERS WILL BE ABLE TO... THAT IS WHEN YOU MEET WITH HIM TONIGHT ....
CEREBUS ISN'T MEETING WITH ANYONE...!
OOOH. MM. OOH. MM. BUT, YOU SEE... THE BISHOP WAS MOST INSISTENT... HE SAID... QUITE PLAINLY... HE SAID...
CEREBUS ISN'T MEETING WITH ANYONE, PERIOD!

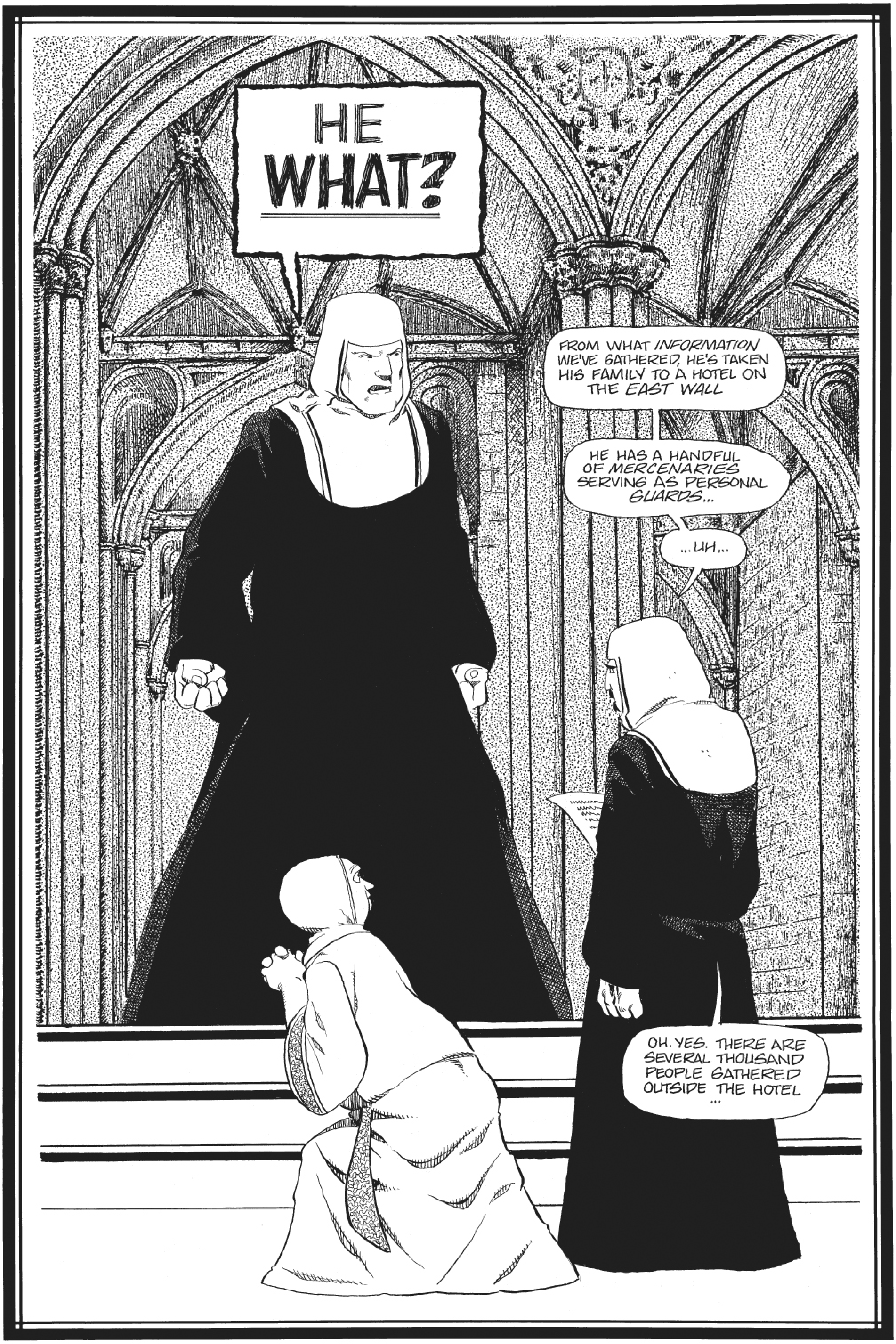

TELL HIM THAT, *PUDDING-FACE*
MMM! MMM! MMM
NO MORE MEETINGS! ***NO*** MORE AIDES! ***NO*** MORE ASSISTANTS! ***NO*** MORE ***PARASITES*** OF ***ANY*** KIND...!
MMM! MMM! MMM!
AND TELL HIM THE **NEXT** TIME HE SENDS MOST HOLY A **LIMP**-WRISTED **PUCKER**-FACED SACK OF ***SUET***, MOST HOLY IS GOING TO SEND HIM **BACK** IN ***BITE-SIZE BITS!!***
MM MM

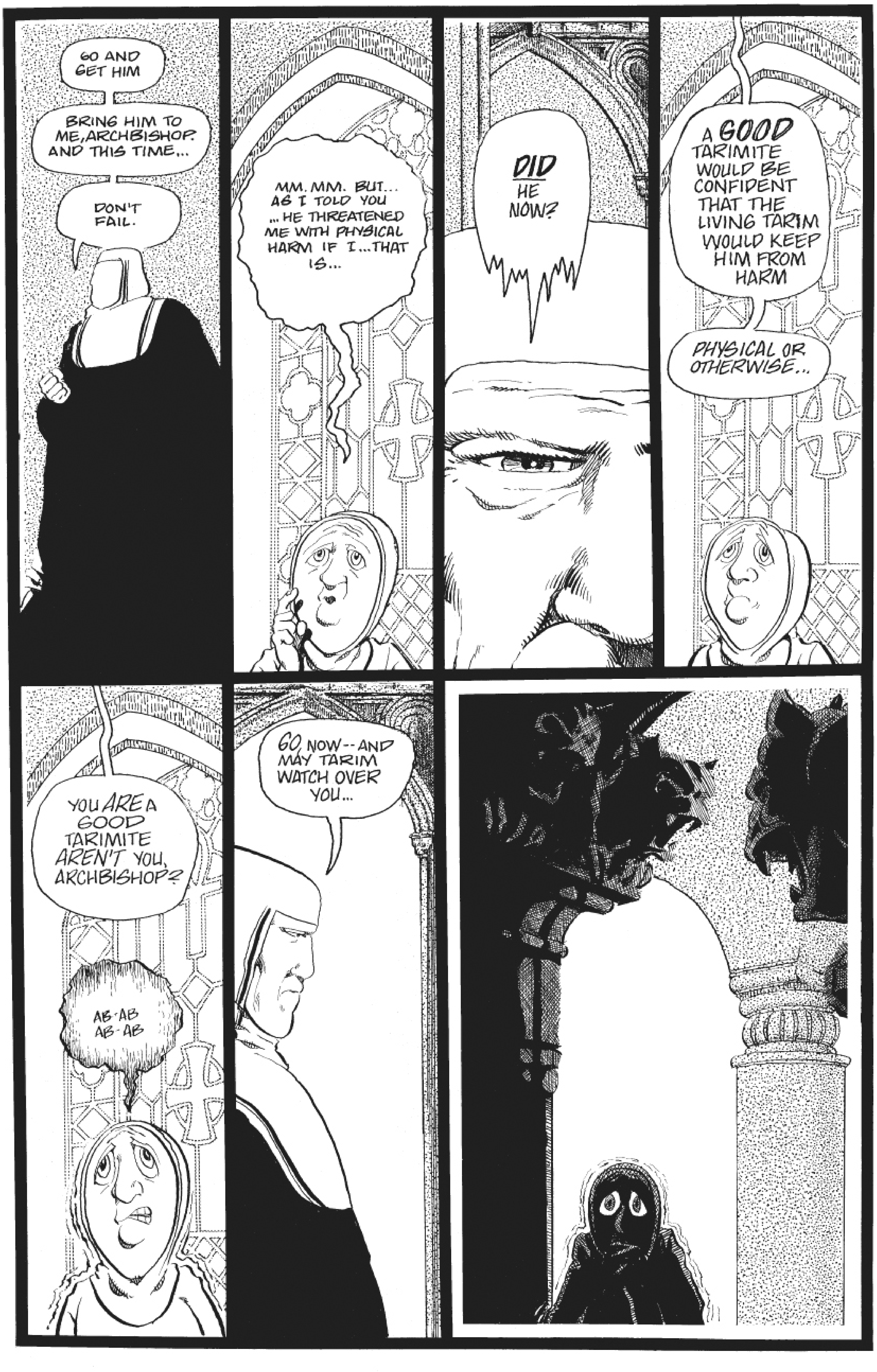

WELL, I DON'T SEE WHY YOU TWO CAN'T GET ALONG
IT ISN'T MY FAULT-- HE ALWAYS--
SLAM
CEREBUS DARLING! MOTHER AND I WERE WORRIED
I WASN'T WORRIED --FOR ALL I CARE HE CAN DROP OFF THE FACE OF THE...
ORDER A CARRIAGE AND PACK ALL YOUR THINGS... WE'RE LEAVING...
LEAVING? BUT WHY? IS SOMETHING WRONG?
HE BLEW IT-- HE SAID SOMETHING TO THAT ARCHBISHOP AND NOW WE'RE ...
ORDER A CARRIAGE--
PACK YOUR THINGS
AND SHUT UP!

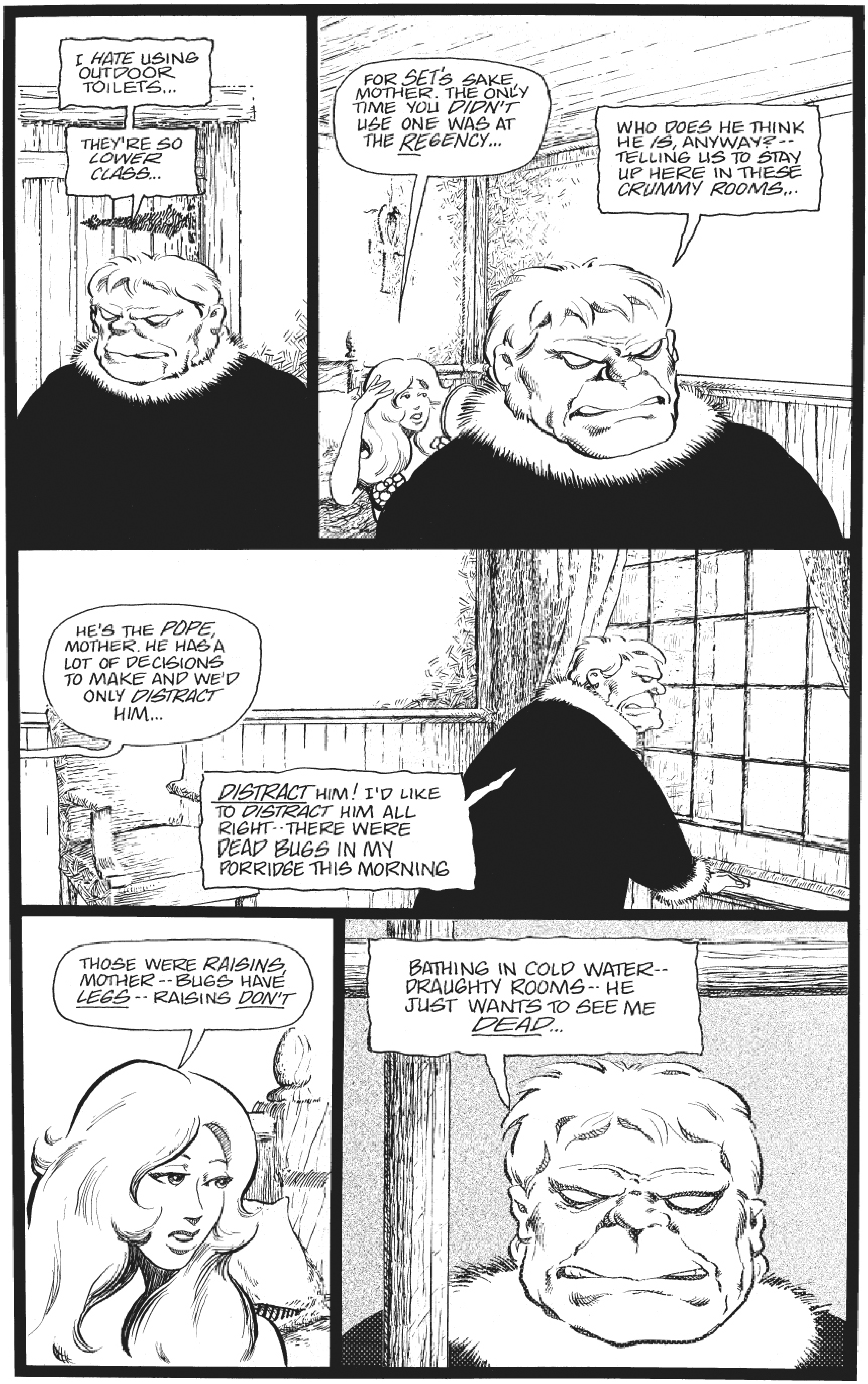

CEREBUS WANTS THAT RAIN STOPPED *NOW!*
OH, WELL-- TWO OUT OF *THREE* ISN'T BAD.

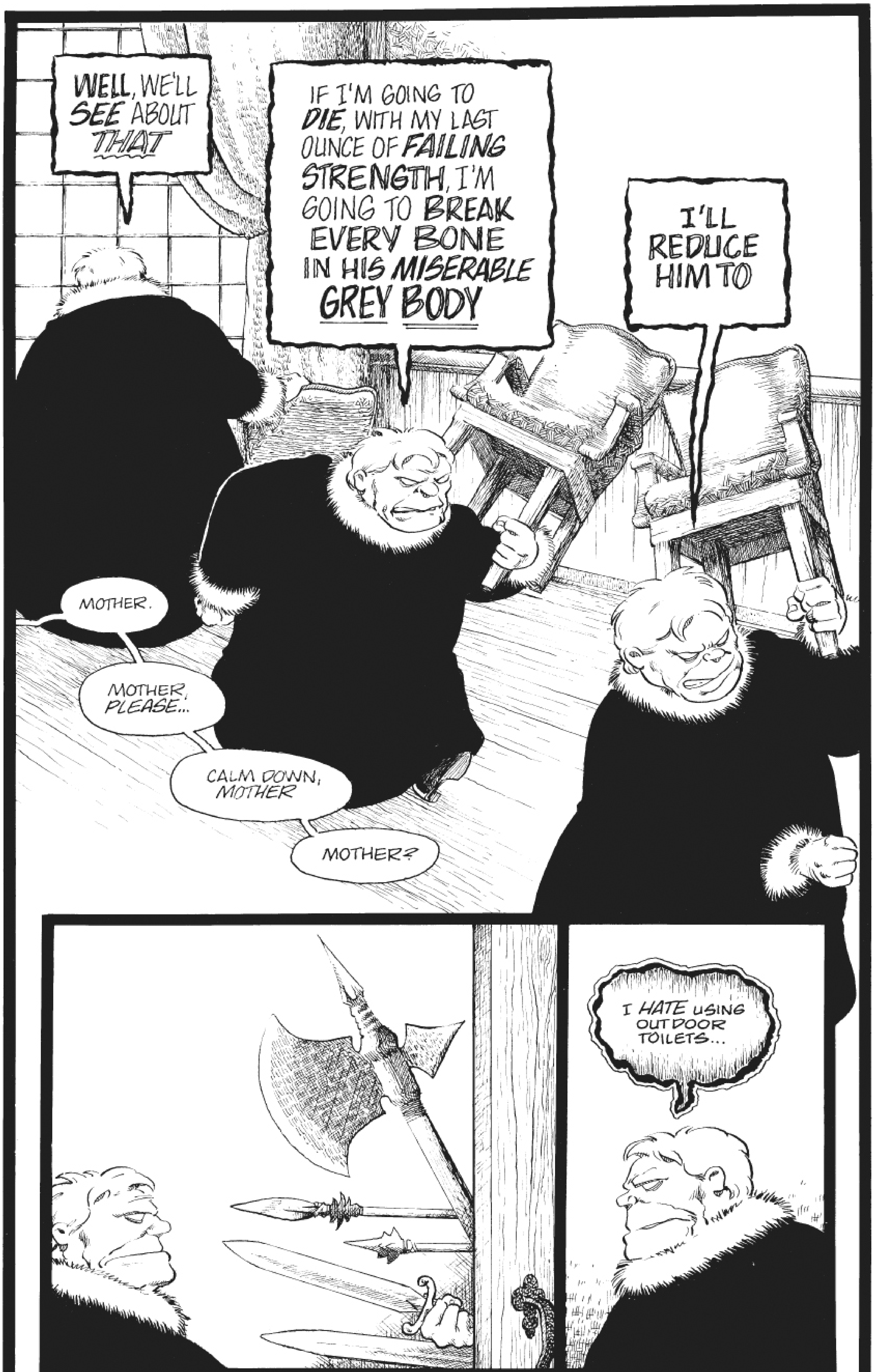

HE WHAT?
HE -- UM -- THAT IS -- HE RATHER -- AT LEAST, IT SEEMS...
THAT IS TO SAY, HE... MM. MMM.
HE DOESN'T WISH TO MM... MEET WITH YOU.

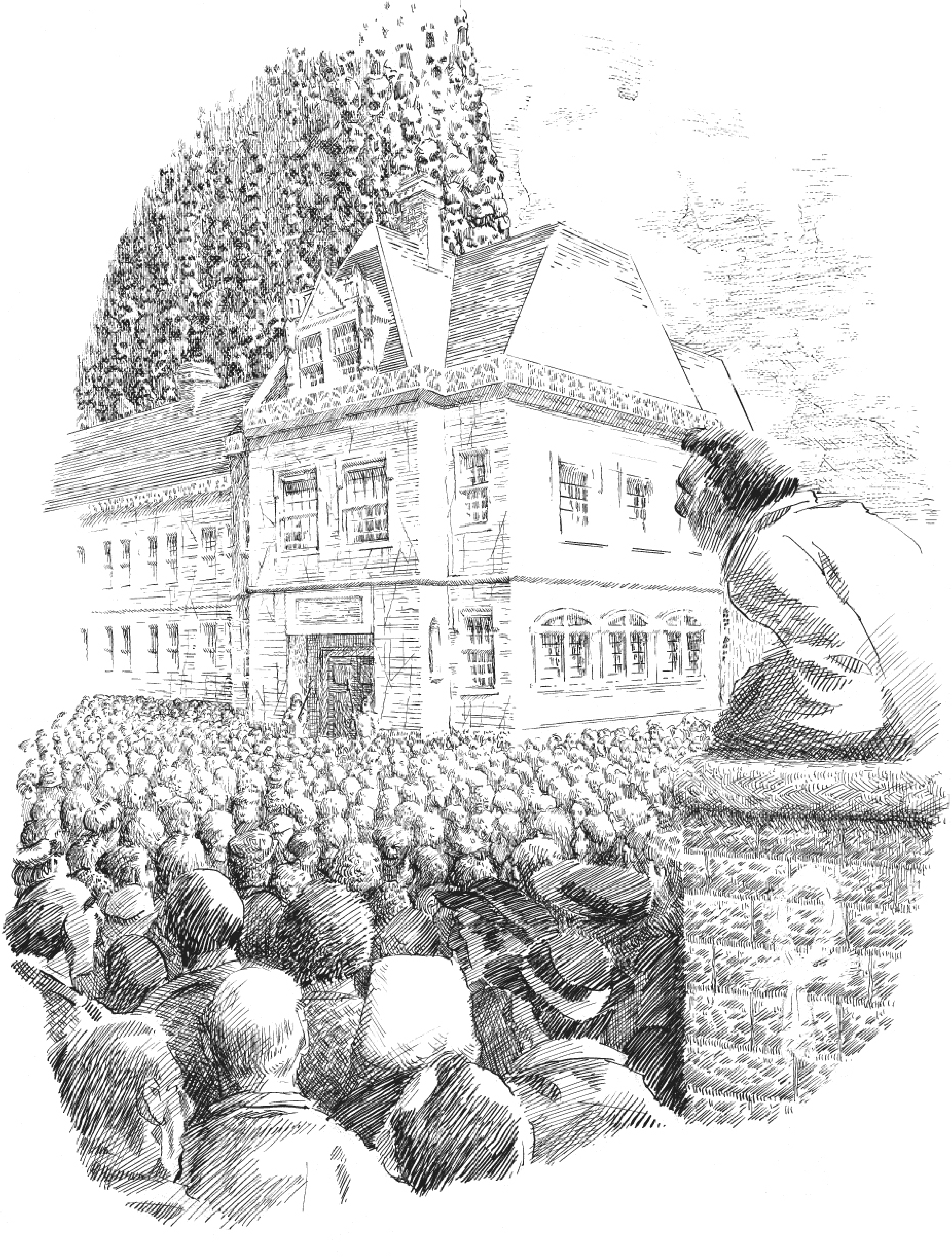
any
thing
done
FOR
the FIRST
TIME
unleashes
a demon

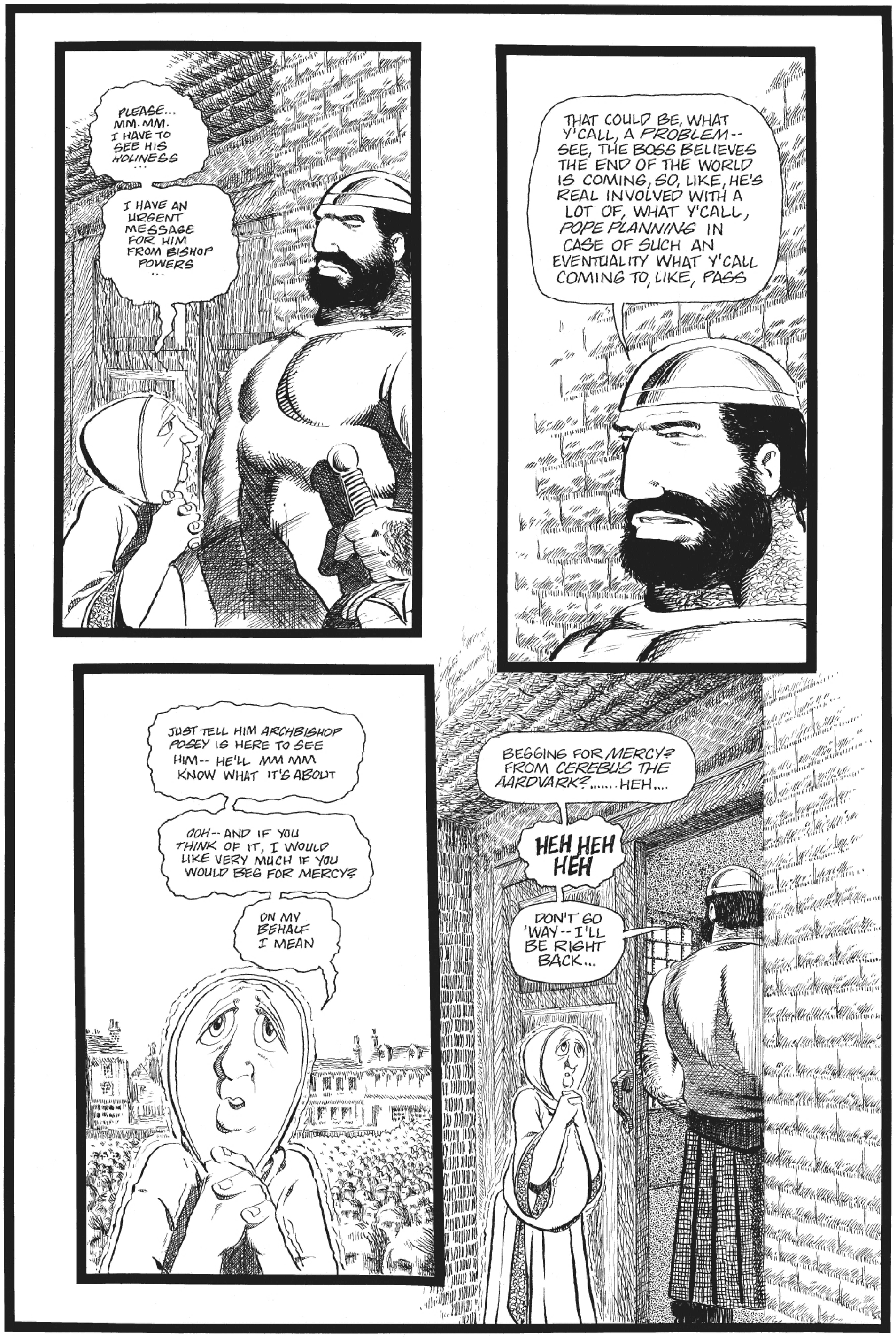

HE WHAT?
FROM WHAT INFORMATION WE'VE GATHERED, HE'S TAKEN HIS FAMILY TO A HOTEL ON THE EAST WALL
HE HAS A HANDFUL OF MERCENARIES SERVING AS PERSONAL GUARDS...
...UH...
OH. YES. THERE ARE SEVERAL THOUSAND PEOPLE GATHERED OUTSIDE THE HOTEL ...

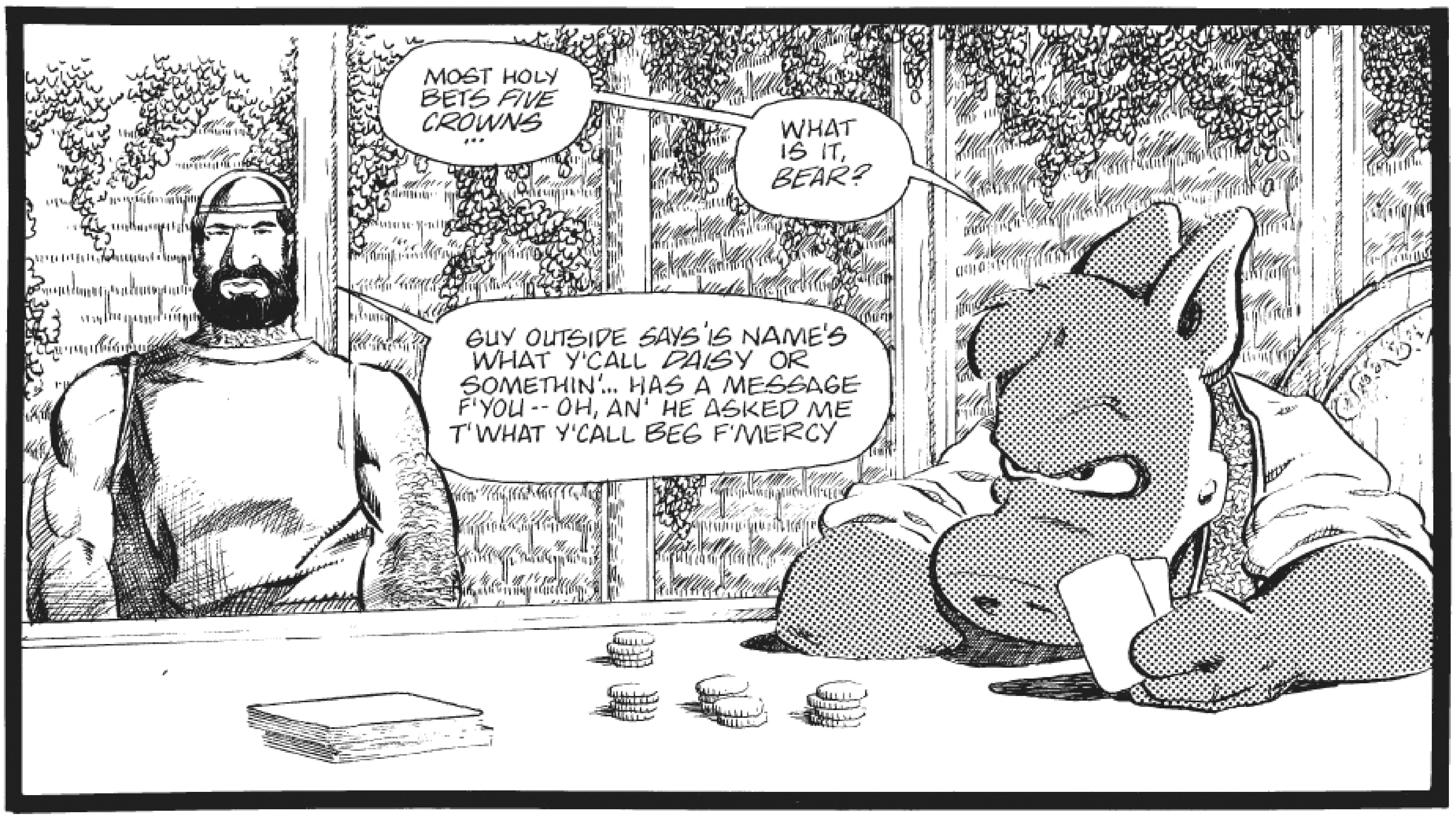

GO AND GET HIM
BRING HIM TO ME, ARCHBISHOP. AND THIS TIME...
DON'T FAIL.
MM. MM. BUT... AS I TOLD YOU ...HE THREATENED ME WITH PHYSICAL HARM IF I...THAT IS...
DID HE NOW?
A GOOD TARIMITE WOULD BE CONFIDENT THAT THE LIVING TARIM WOULD KEEP HIM FROM HARM
PHYSICAL OR OTHERWISE...
YOU ARE A GOOD TARIMITE AREN'T YOU, ARCHBISHOP?
AB-AB AB-AB
GO NOW--AND MAY TARIM WATCH OVER YOU...

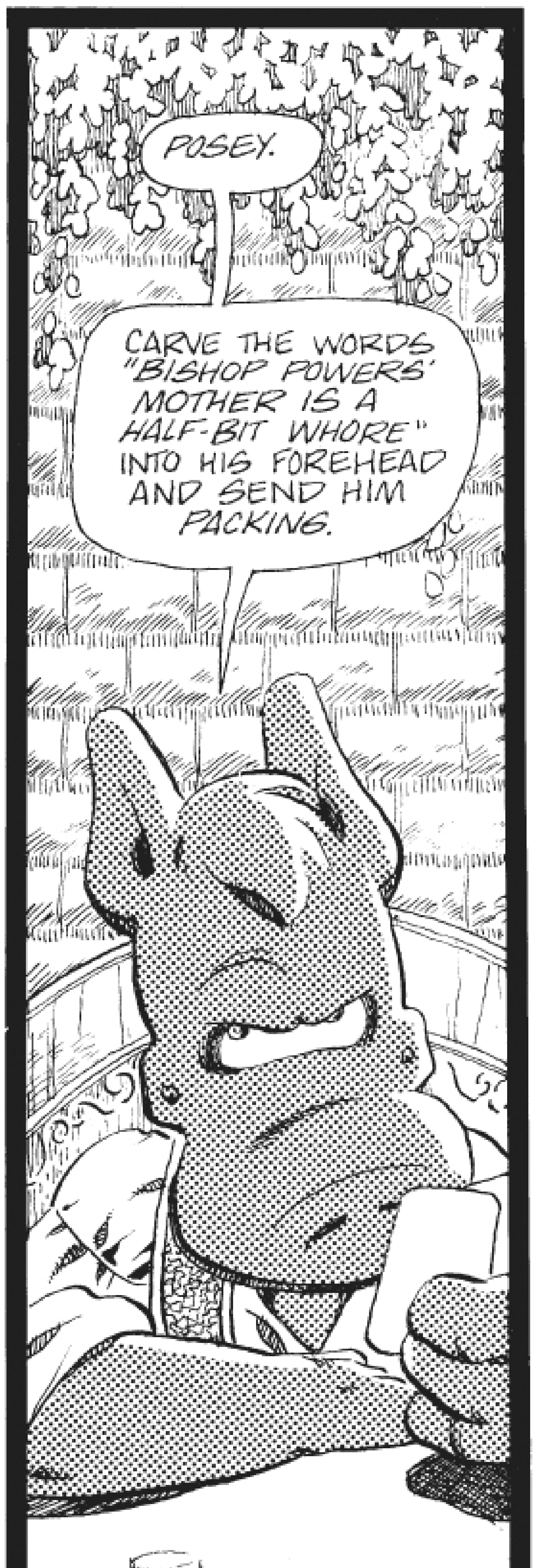

I HATE USING OUTDOOR TOILETS...
THEY'RE SO LOWER CLASS...
FOR SET'S SAKE MOTHER. THE ONLY TIME YOU DIDN'T USE ONE WAS AT THE REGENCY...
WHO DOES HE THINK HE IS, ANYWAY?--TELLING US TO STAY UP HERE IN THESE CRUMMY ROOMS...
HE'S THE POPE, MOTHER. HE HAS A LOT OF DECISIONS TO MAKE AND WE'D ONLY DISTRACT HIM...
DISTRACT HIM! I'D LIKE TO DISTRACT HIM ALL RIGHT--THERE WERE DEAD BUGS IN MY PORRIDGE THIS MORNING
THOSE WERE RAISINS, MOTHER--BUGS HAVE LEGS--RAISINS DON'T
BATHING IN COLD WATER--DRAUGHTY ROOMS--HE JUST WANTS TO SEE ME DEAD...

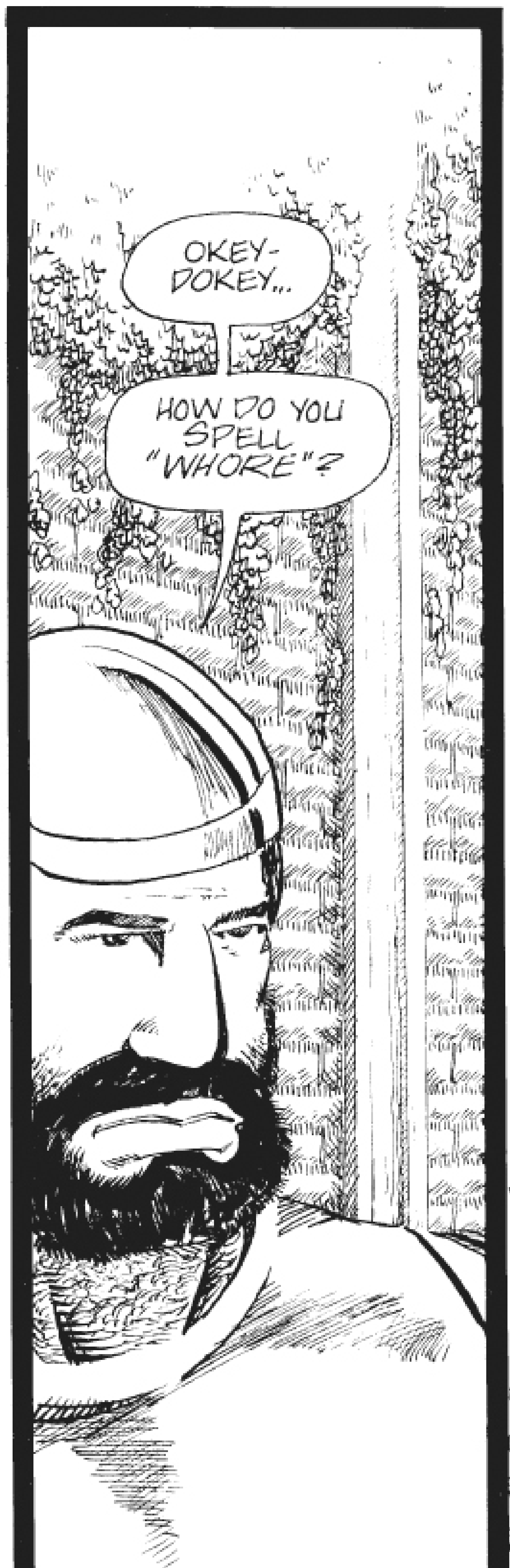

WELL, WE'LL SEE ABOUT THAT
IF I'M GOING TO DIE, WITH MY LAST OUNCE OF FAILING STRENGTH, I'M GOING TO BREAK EVERY BONE IN HIS MISERABLE GREY BODY
I'LL REDUCE HIM TO
MOTHER.
MOTHER, PLEASE...
CALM DOWN, MOTHER
MOTHER?
I HATE USING OUTDOOR TOILETS...

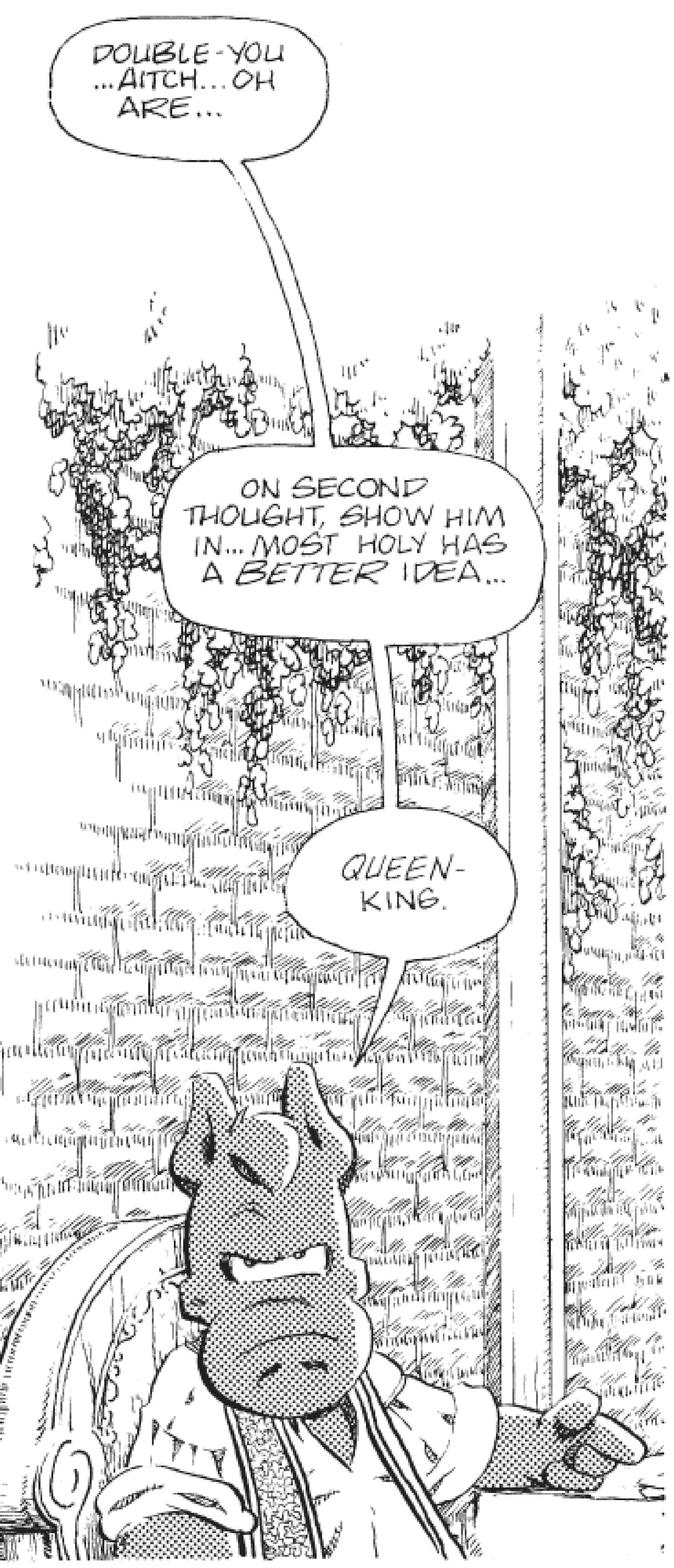


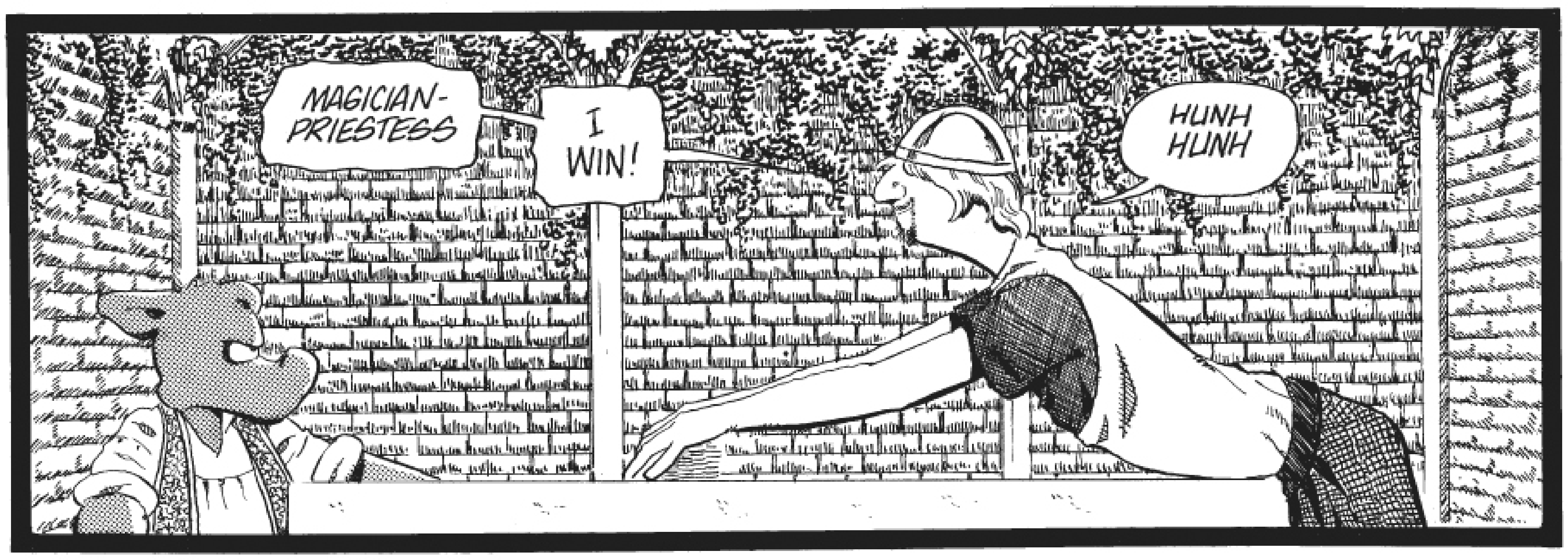

PLEASE... MM.MM. I HAVE TO SEE HIS HOLINESS ...
I HAVE AN URGENT MESSAGE FOR HIM FROM BISHOP POWERS ...
THAT COULD BE, WHAT Y'CALL, A *PROBLEM*-- SEE, THE BOSS BELIEVES THE END OF THE WORLD IS COMING, SO, LIKE, HE'S REAL INVOLVED WITH A LOT OF, WHAT Y'CALL, *POPE PLANNING* IN CASE OF SUCH AN EVENTUALITY WHAT Y'CALL COMING TO, LIKE, PASS
JUST TELL HIM *ARCHBISHOP POSEY* IS HERE TO SEE HIM-- HE'LL MM MM KNOW WHAT IT'S ABOUT
OOH-- AND IF YOU THINK OF IT, I WOULD LIKE VERY MUCH IF YOU WOULD BEG FOR MERCY?
ON MY BEHALF I MEAN
BEGGING FOR *MERCY*? FROM *CEREBUS THE AARDVARK*?...... HEH....
HEH HEH HEH
DON'T GO 'WAY-- I'LL BE RIGHT BACK...

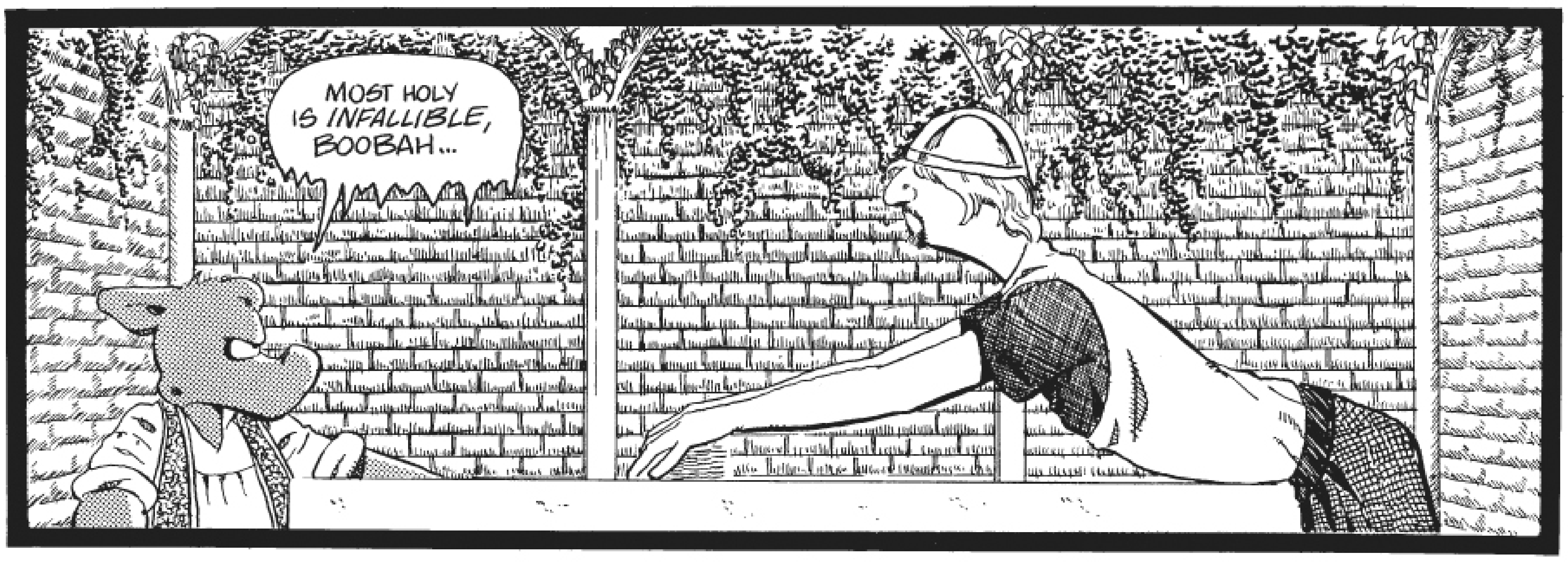

MOST HOLY BETS *FIVE* CROWNS ...
WHAT IS IT, *BEAR*?
GUY OUTSIDE SAYS 'IS NAME'S WHAT Y'CALL *DAISY* OR SOMETHIN'... HAS A MESSAGE F'YOU -- OH, AN' HE ASKED ME T'WHAT Y'CALL BEG F'MERCY

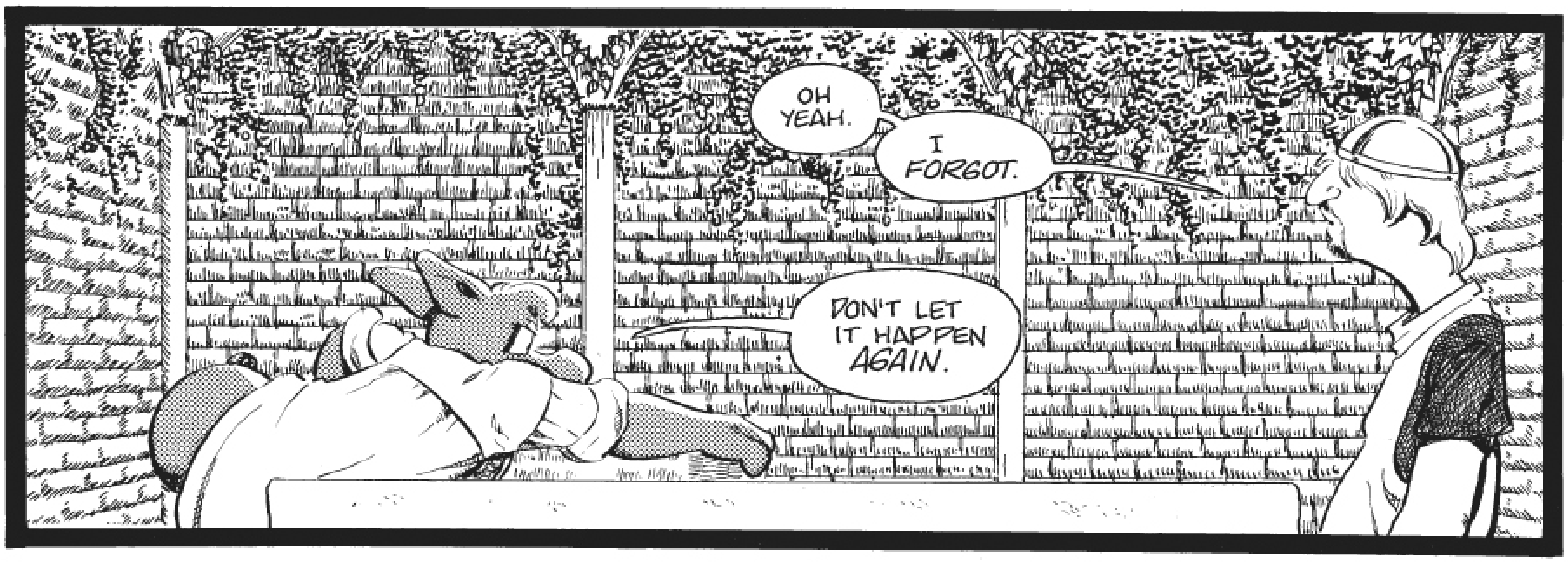

POSEY.
CARVE THE WORDS "*BISHOP POWERS' MOTHER IS A HALF-BIT WHORE*" INTO HIS FOREHEAD AND SEND HIM *PACKING*.

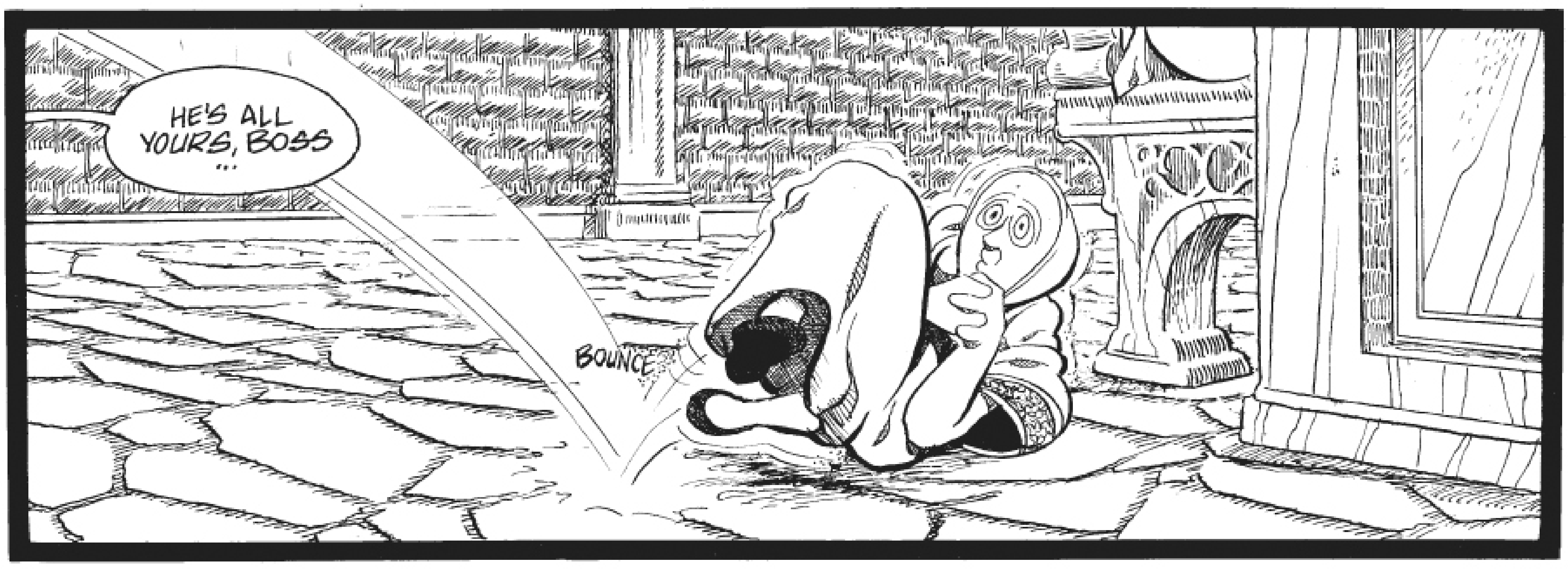

OKEY-DOKEY...
HOW DO YOU SPELL "*WHORE*"?

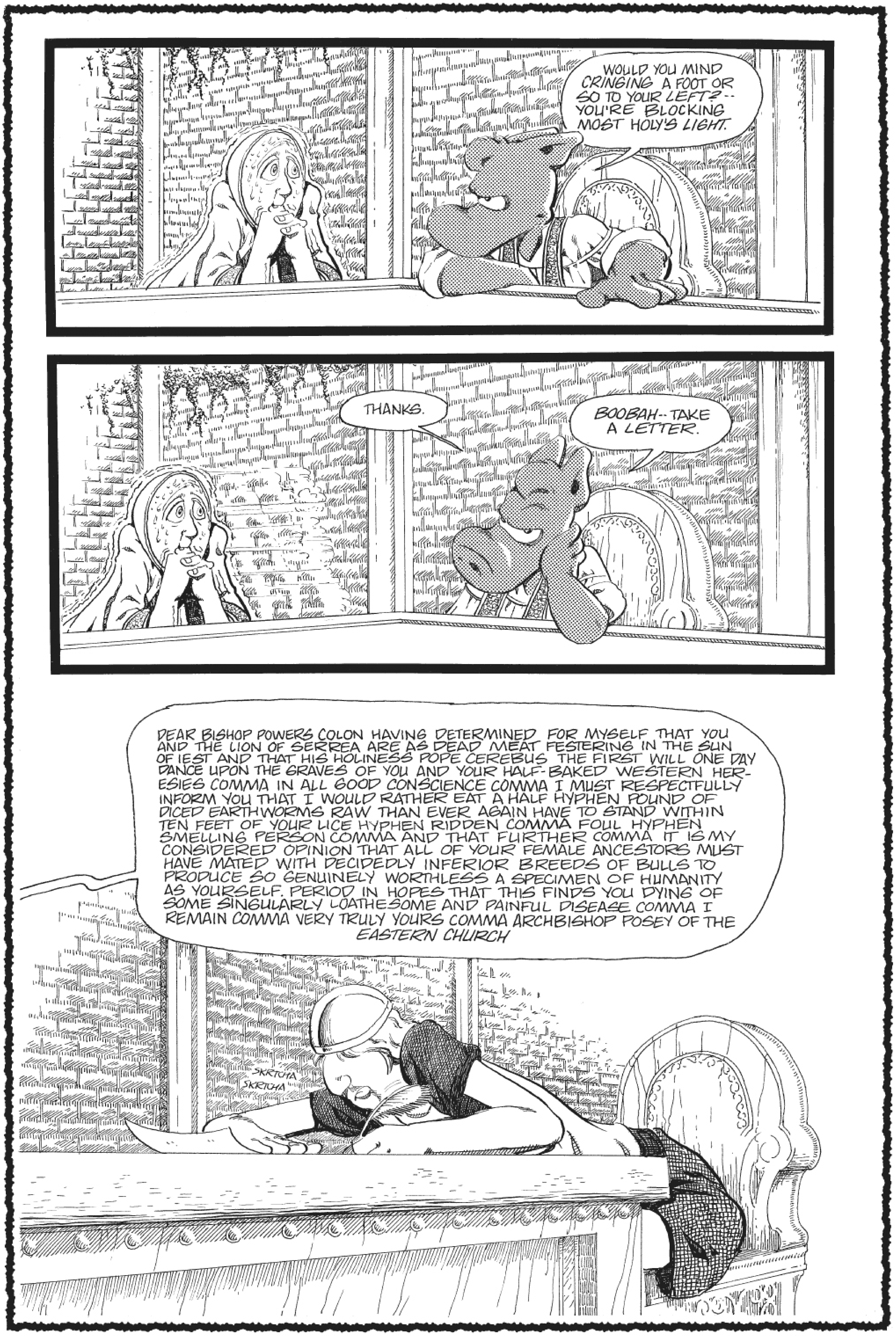

DOUBLE-YOU ...AITCH...OH ARE...
ON SECOND THOUGHT, SHOW HIM IN... MOST HOLY HAS A *BETTER* IDEA...
QUEEN-KING.

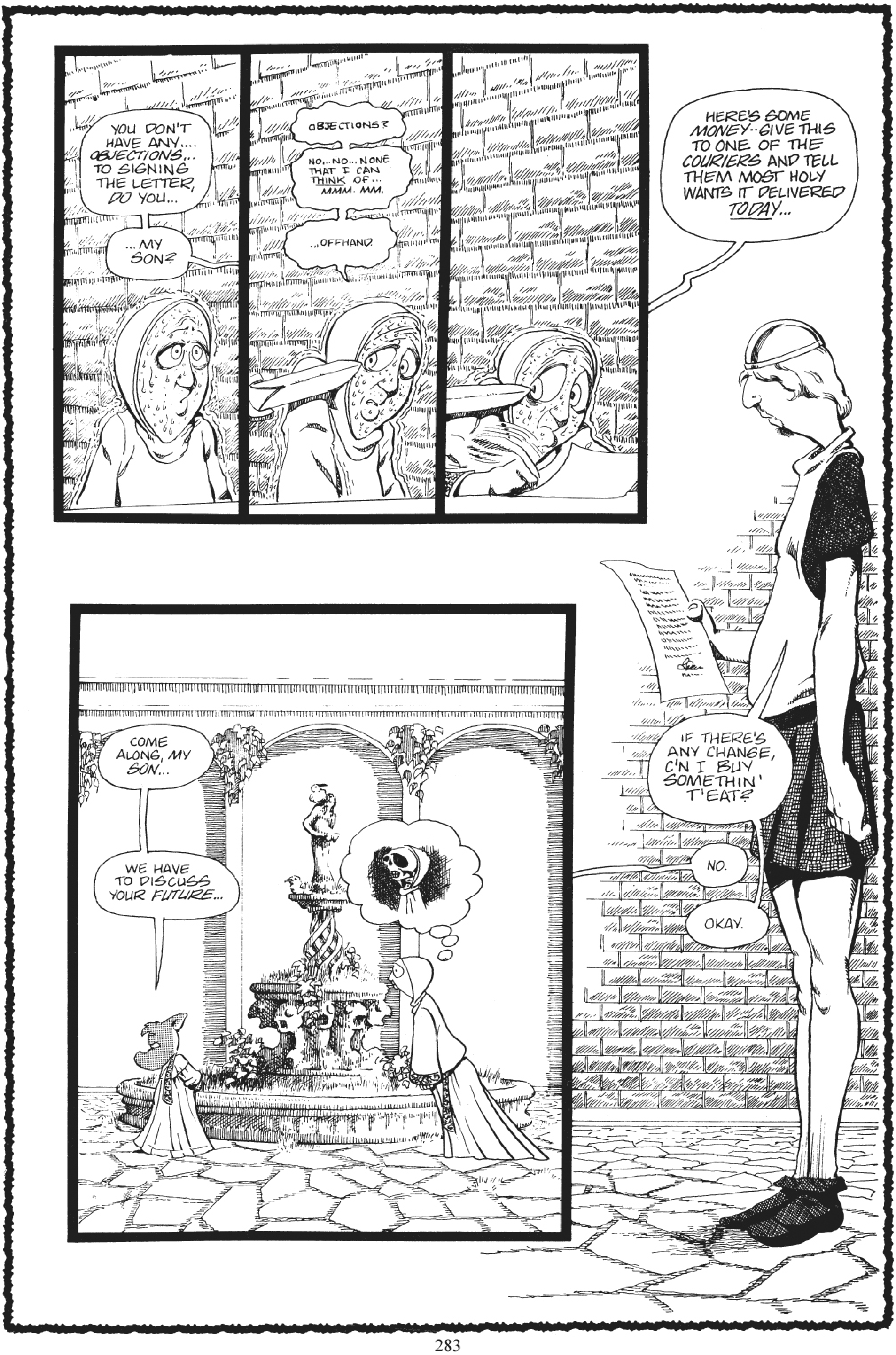

MAGICIAN-PRIESTESS
I WIN!
HUNH HUNH

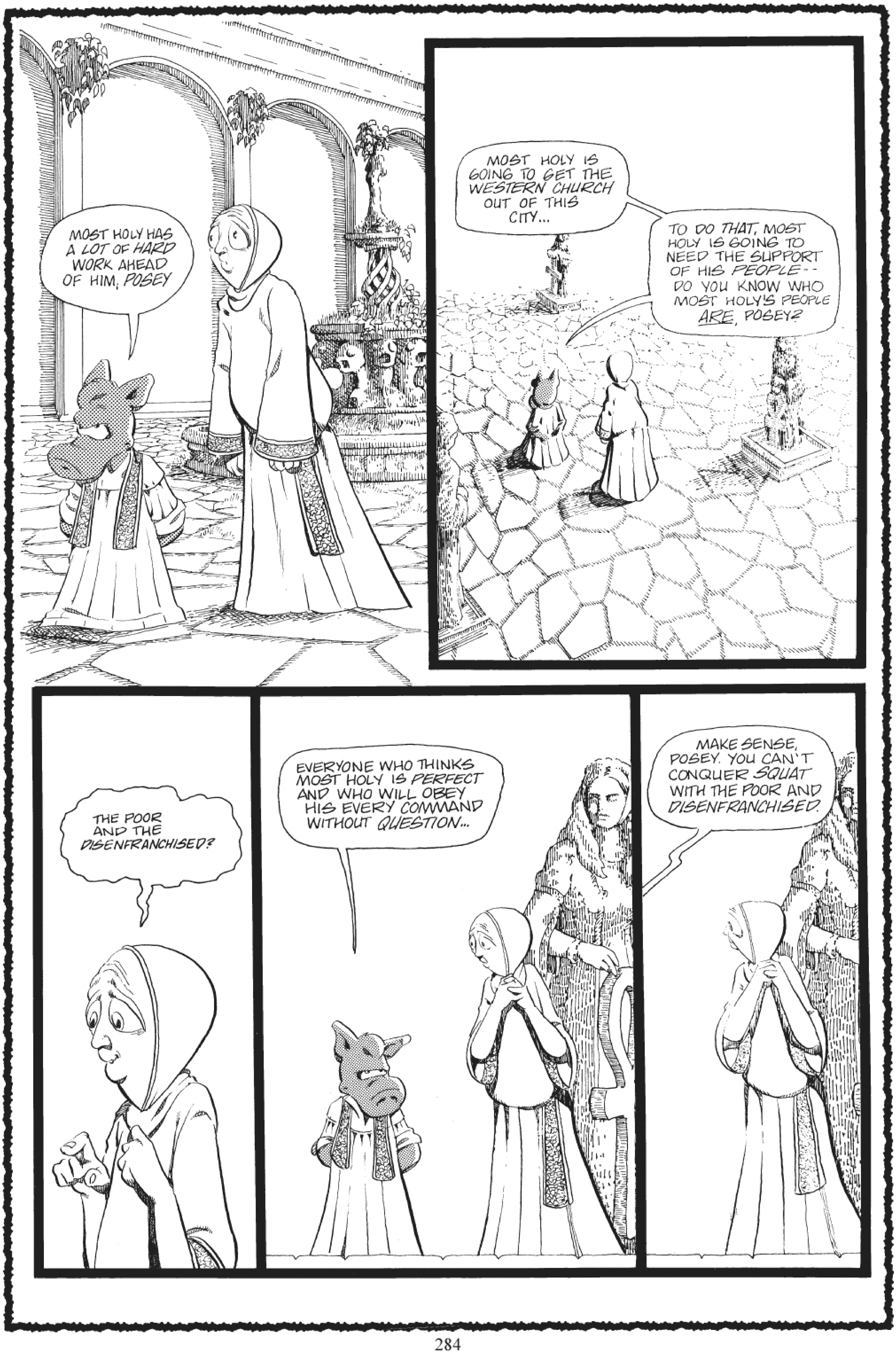

MOST HOLY IS *INFALLIBLE*, BOOBAH...

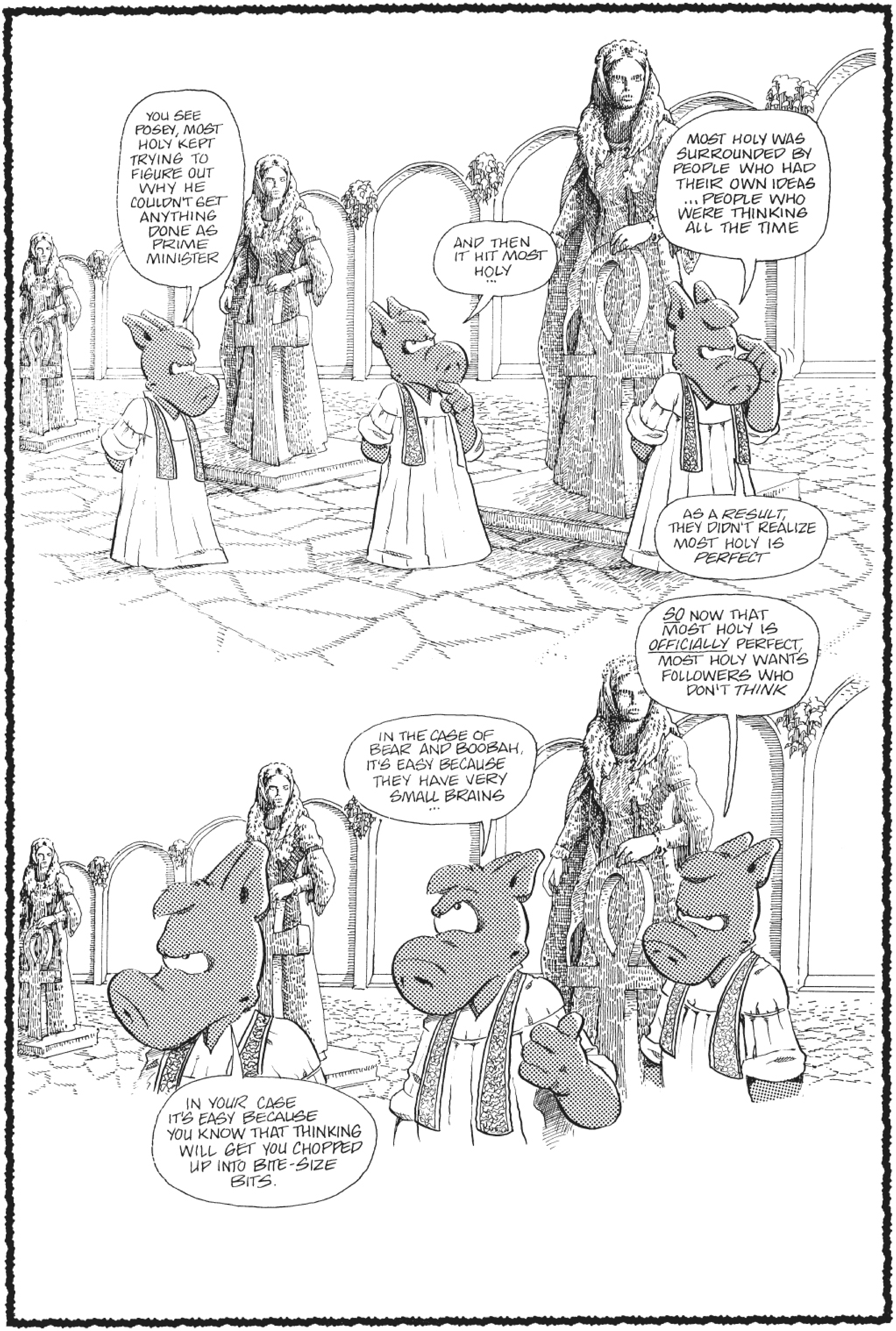

OH YEAH.
I *FORGOT*.
DON'T LET IT HAPPEN *AGAIN*.

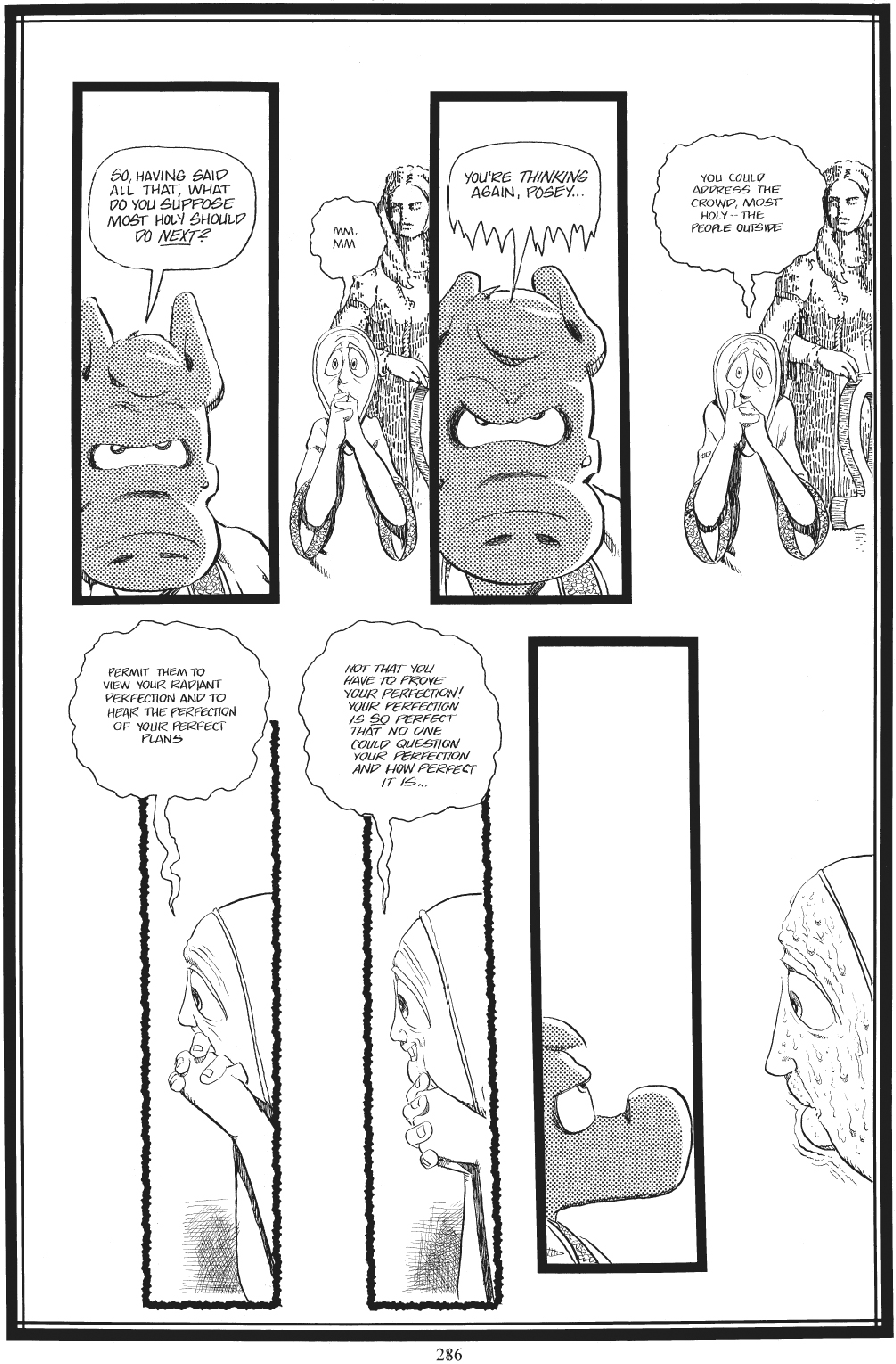

HE'S ALL YOURS, BOSS ...
BOUNCE

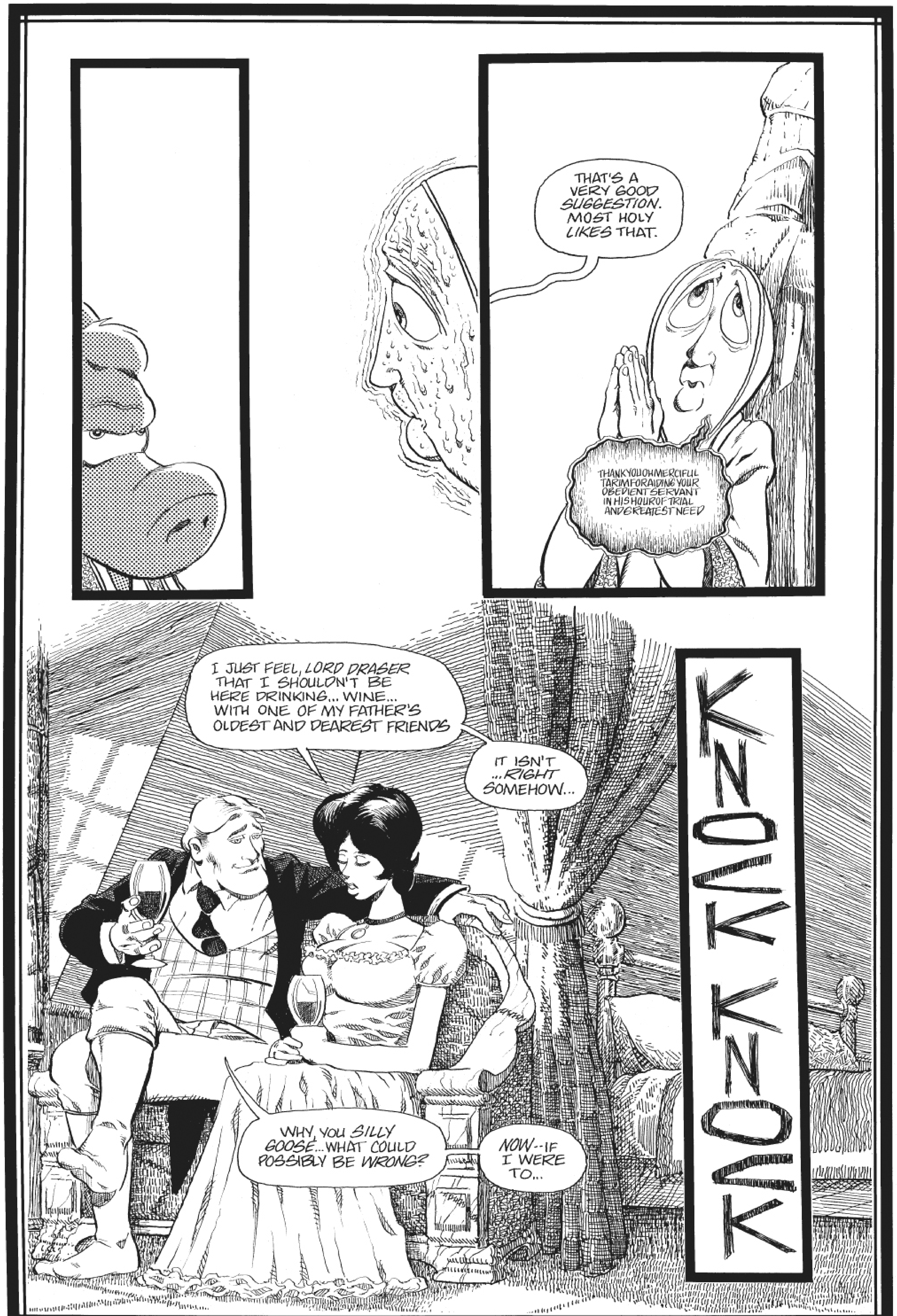

WOULD YOU MIND CRINGING A FOOT OR SO TO YOUR LEFT?-- YOU'RE BLOCKING MOST HOLY'S LIGHT.
THANKS.
BOOBAH--TAKE A LETTER.
DEAR BISHOP POWERS COLON HAVING DETERMINED FOR MYSELF THAT YOU AND THE LION OF SERREA ARE AS DEAD MEAT FESTERING IN THE SUN OF IEST AND THAT HIS HOLINESS POPE CEREBUS THE FIRST WILL ONE DAY DANCE UPON THE GRAVES OF YOU AND YOUR HALF-BAKED WESTERN HERESIES COMMA IN ALL GOOD CONSCIENCE COMMA I MUST RESPECTFULLY INFORM YOU THAT I WOULD RATHER EAT A HALF HYPHEN POUND OF DICED EARTHWORMS RAW THAN EVER AGAIN HAVE TO STAND WITHIN TEN FEET OF YOUR LICE HYPHEN RIDDEN COMMA FOUL HYPHEN SMELLING PERSON COMMA AND THAT FURTHER COMMA IT IS MY CONSIDERED OPINION THAT ALL OF YOUR FEMALE ANCESTORS MUST HAVE MATED WITH DECIDEDLY INFERIOR BREEDS OF BULLS TO PRODUCE SO GENUINELY WORTHLESS A SPECIMEN OF HUMANITY AS YOURSELF. PERIOD IN HOPES THAT THIS FINDS YOU DYING OF SOME SINGULARLY LOATHESOME AND PAINFUL DISEASE COMMA I REMAIN COMMA VERY TRULY YOURS COMMA ARCHBISHOP POSEY OF THE EASTERN CHURCH
SKRTCHA SKRTCHA

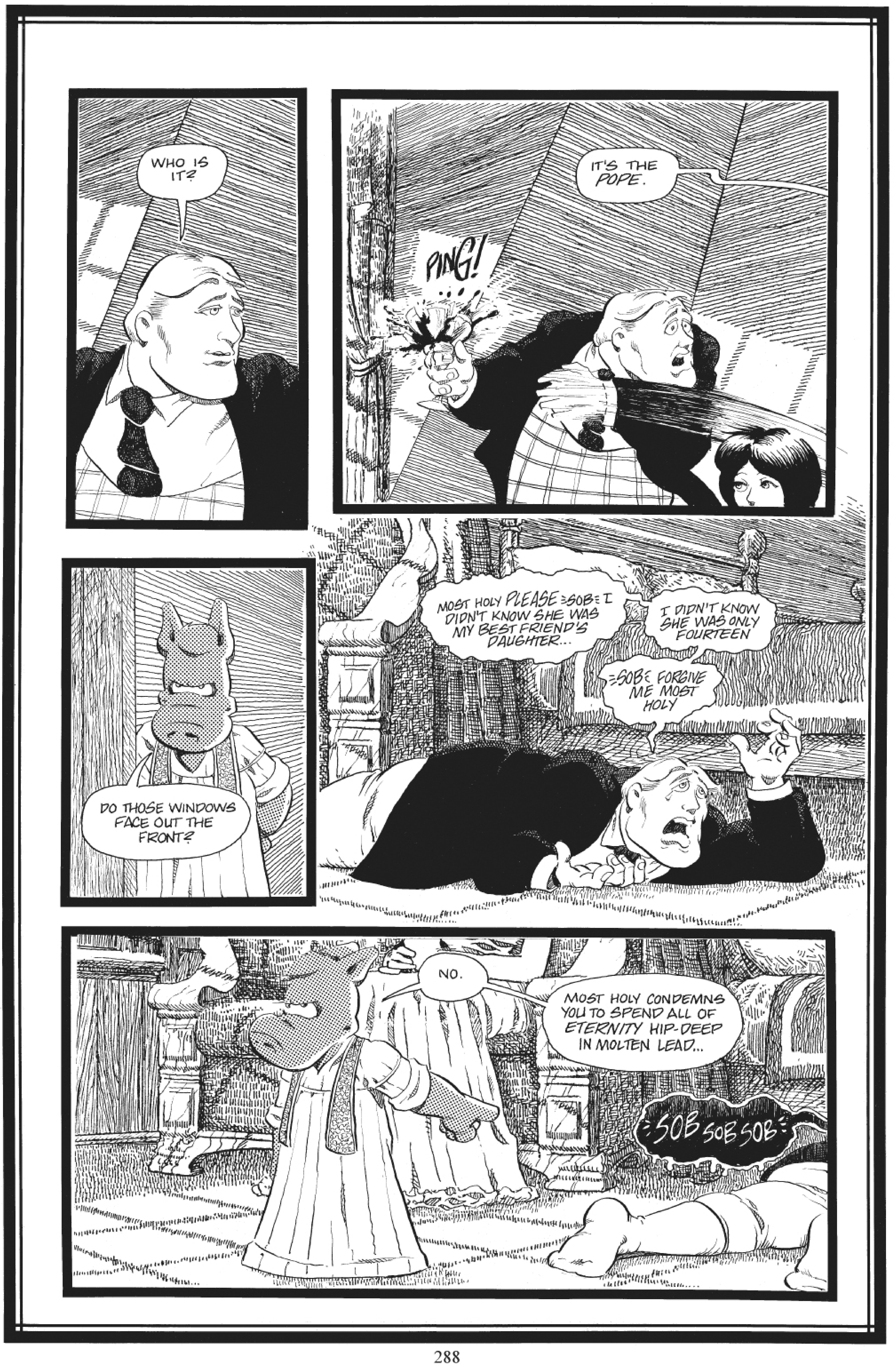

YOU DON'T HAVE ANY.... *OBJECTIONS*... TO SIGNING THE LETTER, *DO* YOU...
...MY SON?
OBJECTIONS?
NO,..NO... NONE THAT I CAN THINK OF... MMM. MM.
...OFFHAND.
HERE'S SOME *MONEY*..GIVE THIS TO ONE OF THE *COURIERS* AND TELL THEM MOST HOLY WANTS IT DELIVERED *TODAY*...
IF THERE'S ANY CHANGE, C'N I BUY SOMETHIN' T'EAT?
NO.
OKAY.
COME ALONG, MY SON...
WE HAVE TO DISCUSS YOUR *FUTURE*...

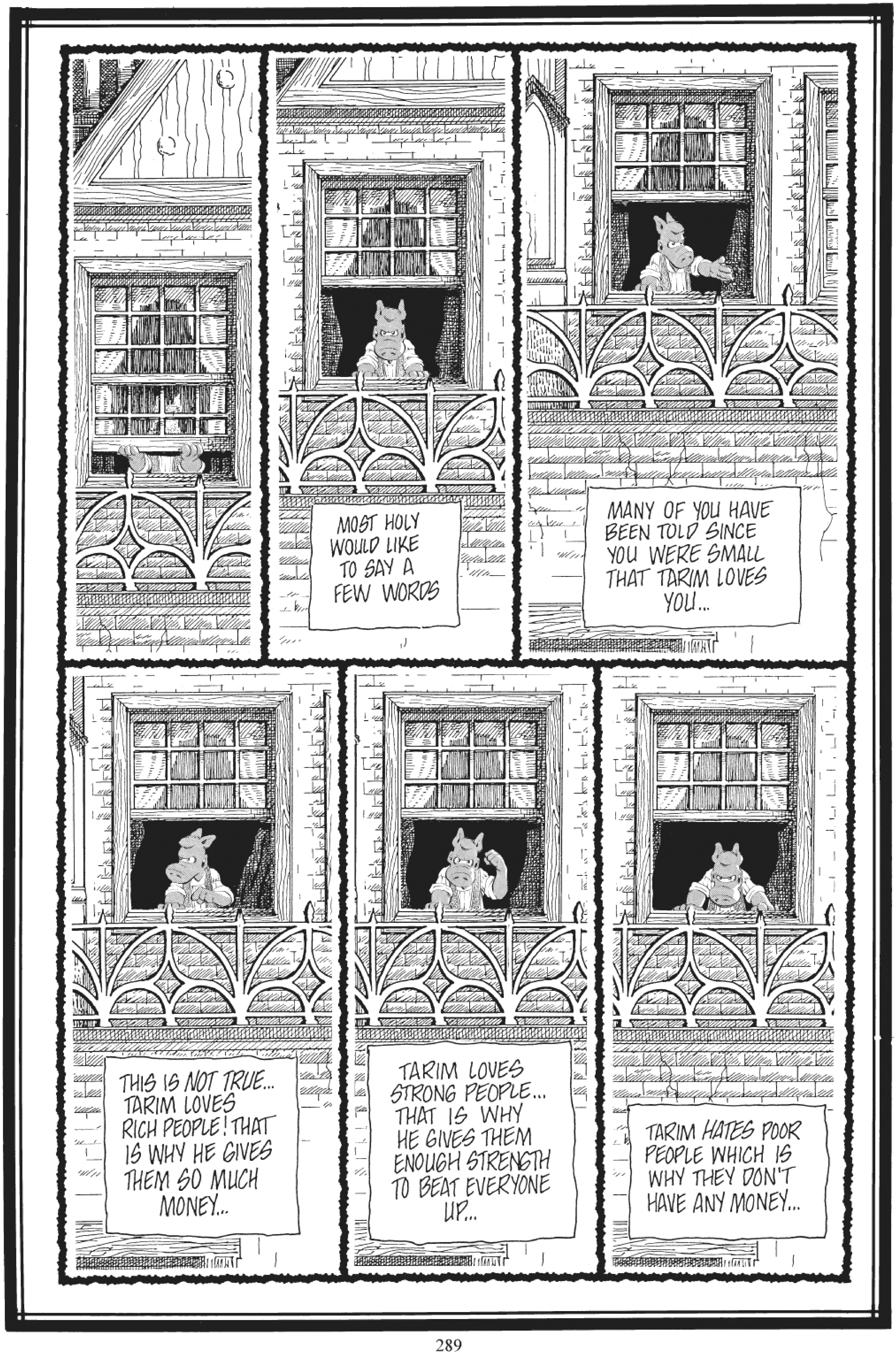

MOST HOLY HAS A LOT OF HARD WORK AHEAD OF HIM, POSEY
MOST HOLY IS GOING TO GET THE WESTERN CHURCH OUT OF THIS CITY...
TO DO THAT, MOST HOLY IS GOING TO NEED THE SUPPORT OF HIS PEOPLE-- DO YOU KNOW WHO MOST HOLY'S PEOPLE ARE, POSEY?
THE POOR AND THE DISENFRANCHISED?
EVERYONE WHO THINKS MOST HOLY IS PERFECT AND WHO WILL OBEY HIS EVERY COMMAND WITHOUT QUESTION...
MAKE SENSE, POSEY. YOU CAN'T CONQUER SQUAT WITH THE POOR AND DISENFRANCHISED.

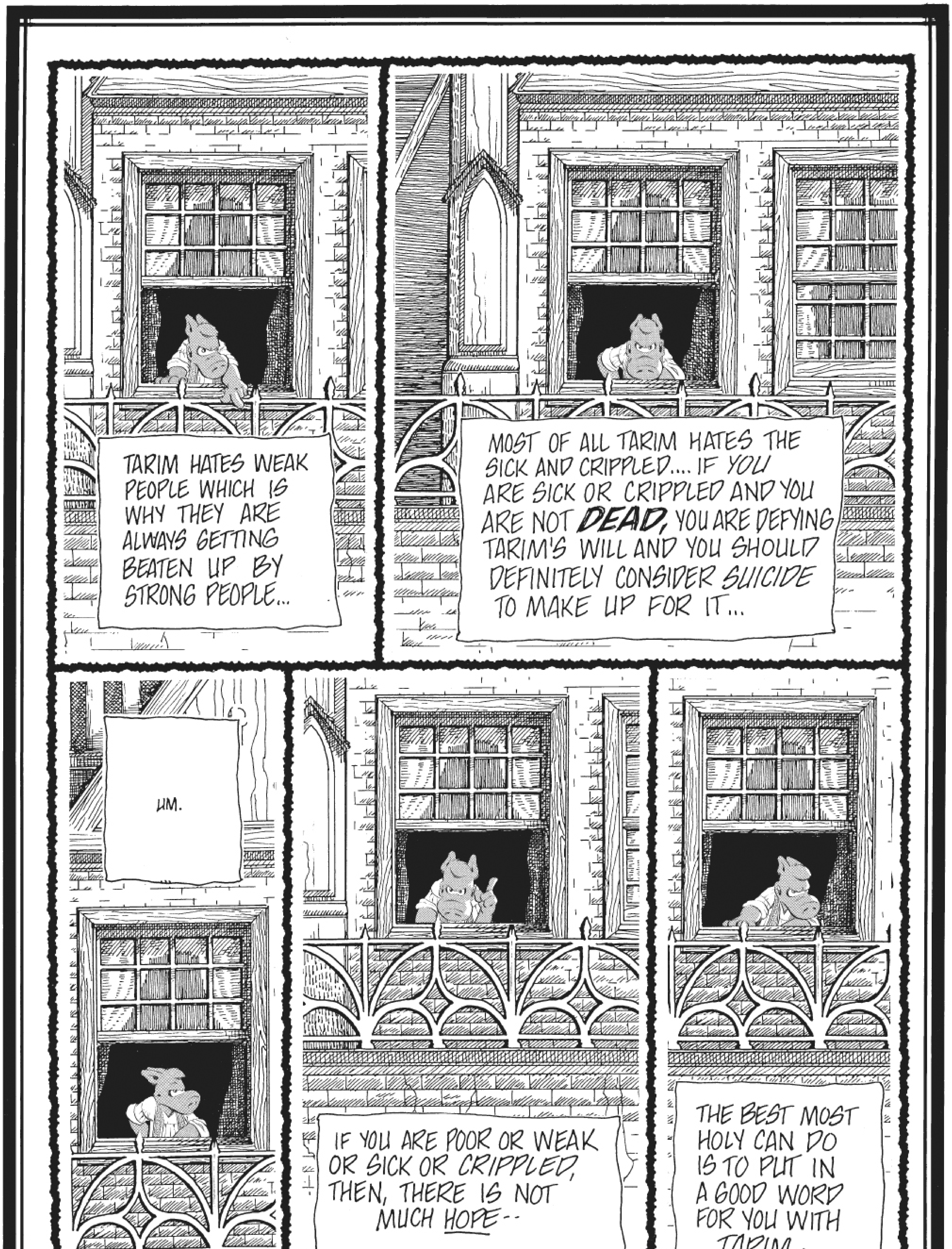

YOU SEE POSEY, MOST HOLY KEPT TRYING TO FIGURE OUT WHY HE COULDN'T GET ANYTHING DONE AS PRIME MINISTER
AND THEN IT HIT MOST HOLY ...
MOST HOLY WAS SURROUNDED BY PEOPLE WHO HAD THEIR OWN IDEAS ... PEOPLE WHO WERE THINKING ALL THE TIME
AS A *RESULT,* THEY DIDN'T REALIZE MOST HOLY IS *PERFECT*
SO NOW THAT MOST HOLY IS OFFICIALLY PERFECT, MOST HOLY WANTS FOLLOWERS WHO DON'T *THINK*
IN THE CASE OF BEAR AND BOOBAH, IT'S EASY BECAUSE THEY HAVE VERY SMALL BRAINS ...
IN *YOUR* CASE IT'S EASY BECAUSE YOU KNOW THAT THINKING WILL GET YOU CHOPPED UP INTO BITE-SIZE BITS.

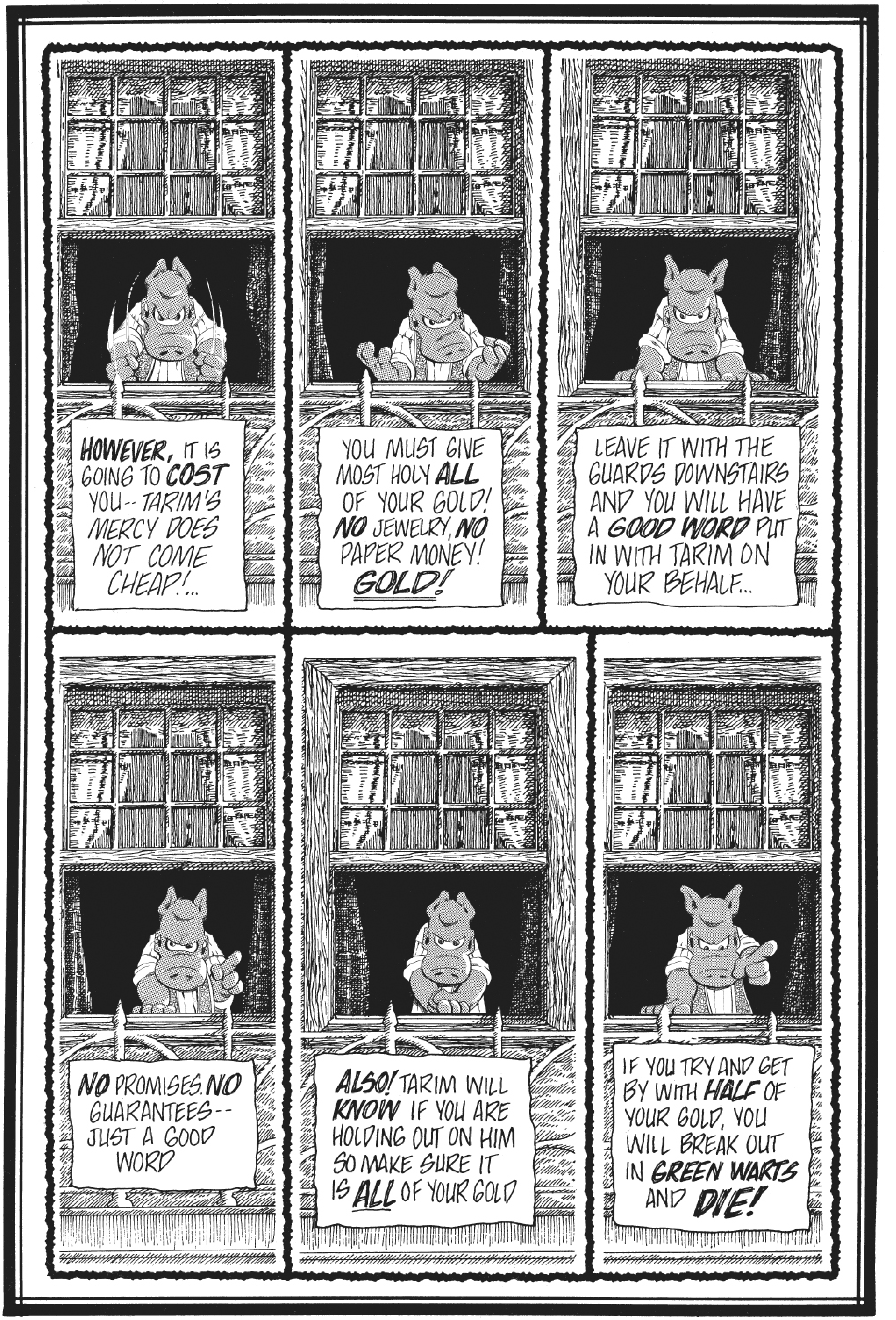

SO, HAVING SAID ALL THAT, WHAT DO YOU SUPPOSE MOST HOLY SHOULD DO *NEXT*?
MM. MM.
YOU'RE *THINKING* AGAIN, POSEY...
YOU COULD ADDRESS THE CROWD, MOST HOLY-- THE PEOPLE OUTSIDE
PERMIT THEM TO VIEW YOUR RADIANT PERFECTION AND TO HEAR THE PERFECTION OF YOUR PERFECT PLANS
NOT THAT YOU HAVE TO PROVE YOUR PERFECTION! YOUR PERFECTION IS SO PERFECT THAT NO ONE COULD QUESTION YOUR PERFECTION AND HOW PERFECT IT IS...

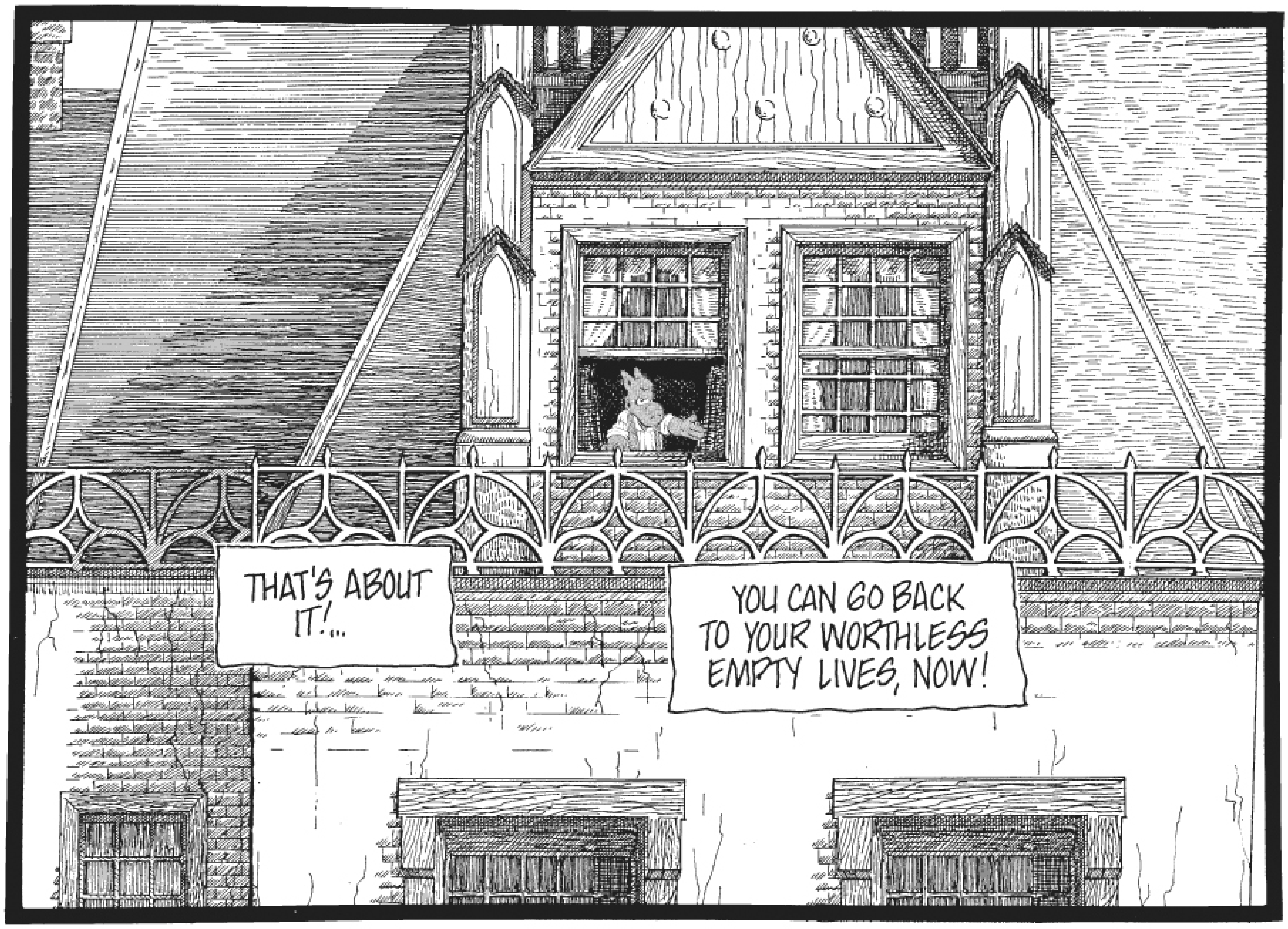

THAT'S A VERY GOOD *SUGGESTION*. MOST HOLY *LIKES* THAT.
THANKYOUOHMERCIFUL TARIMFORAIDING YOUR OBEDIENT SERVANT IN HIS HOUROF TRIAL ANDGREATEST NEED
I JUST FEEL, *LORD DRASER* THAT I SHOULDN'T BE HERE DRINKING... WINE... WITH ONE OF MY FATHER'S OLDEST AND DEAREST FRIENDS
IT ISN'T ...*RIGHT* SOMEHOW...
KNOCK KNOCK
WHY, YOU *SILLY GOOSE*... WHAT COULD POSSIBLY BE *WRONG*?
NOW--IF I WERE TO...

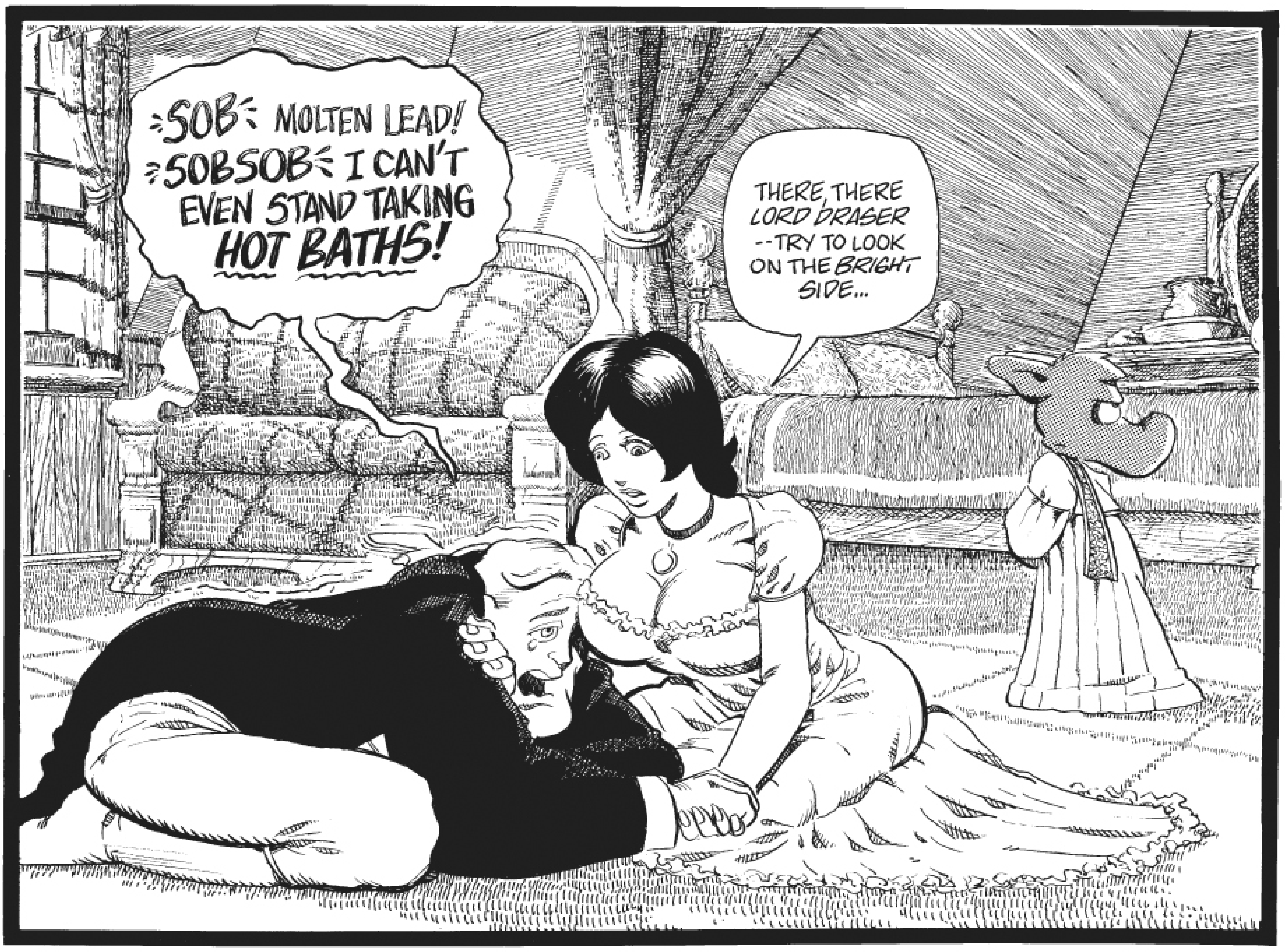

WHO IS IT?
IT'S THE POPE.
PING!
DO THOSE WINDOWS FACE OUT THE FRONT?
MOST HOLY PLEASE =SOB= I DIDN'T KNOW SHE WAS MY BEST FRIEND'S DAUGHTER...
I DIDN'T KNOW SHE WAS ONLY FOURTEEN
=SOB= FORGIVE ME MOST HOLY
NO.
MOST HOLY CONDEMNS YOU TO SPEND ALL OF ETERNITY HIP-DEEP IN MOLTEN LEAD...
=SOB SOB SOB=


MOST HOLY WOULD LIKE TO SAY A FEW WORDS
MANY OF YOU HAVE BEEN TOLD SINCE YOU WERE SMALL THAT TARIM LOVES YOU...
THIS IS *NOT TRUE*... TARIM LOVES RICH PEOPLE! THAT IS WHY HE GIVES THEM SO MUCH MONEY...
TARIM LOVES STRONG PEOPLE... THAT IS WHY HE GIVES THEM ENOUGH STRENGTH TO BEAT EVERYONE UP...
TARIM *HATES* POOR PEOPLE WHICH IS WHY THEY DON'T HAVE ANY MONEY...


TARIM HATES WEAK PEOPLE WHICH IS WHY THEY ARE ALWAYS GETTING BEATEN UP BY STRONG PEOPLE...
MOST OF ALL TARIM HATES THE SICK AND CRIPPLED.... IF *YOU* ARE SICK OR CRIPPLED AND YOU ARE NOT **DEAD,** YOU ARE DEFYING TARIM'S WILL AND YOU SHOULD DEFINITELY CONSIDER *SUICIDE* TO MAKE UP FOR IT...
UM.
IF YOU ARE POOR OR WEAK OR SICK OR *CRIPPLED,* THEN, THERE IS NOT MUCH HOPE--
THE BEST MOST HOLY CAN DO IS TO PUT IN A GOOD WORD FOR YOU WITH *TARIM*--

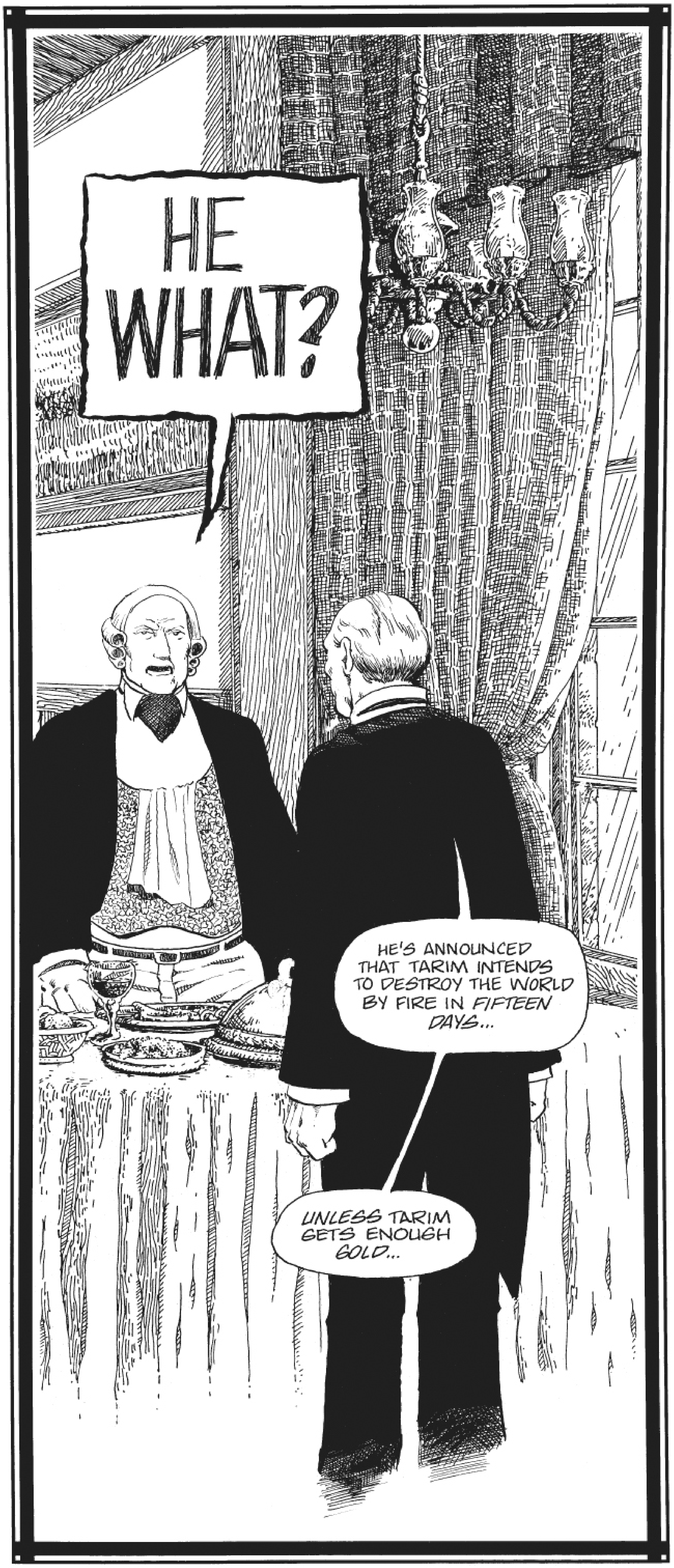

HOWEVER, IT IS GOING TO COST YOU--TARIM'S MERCY DOES NOT COME CHEAP!...
YOU MUST GIVE MOST HOLY ALL OF YOUR GOLD! NO JEWELRY, NO PAPER MONEY! GOLD!
LEAVE IT WITH THE GUARDS DOWNSTAIRS AND YOU WILL HAVE A GOOD WORD PUT IN WITH TARIM ON YOUR BEHALF...
NO PROMISES. NO GUARANTEES--JUST A GOOD WORD
ALSO! TARIM WILL KNOW IF YOU ARE HOLDING OUT ON HIM SO MAKE SURE IT IS ALL OF YOUR GOLD
IF YOU TRY AND GET BY WITH HALF OF YOUR GOLD, YOU WILL BREAK OUT IN GREEN WARTS AND DIE!


THAT'S ABOUT IT!...
YOU CAN GO BACK TO YOUR WORTHLESS EMPTY LIVES, NOW!

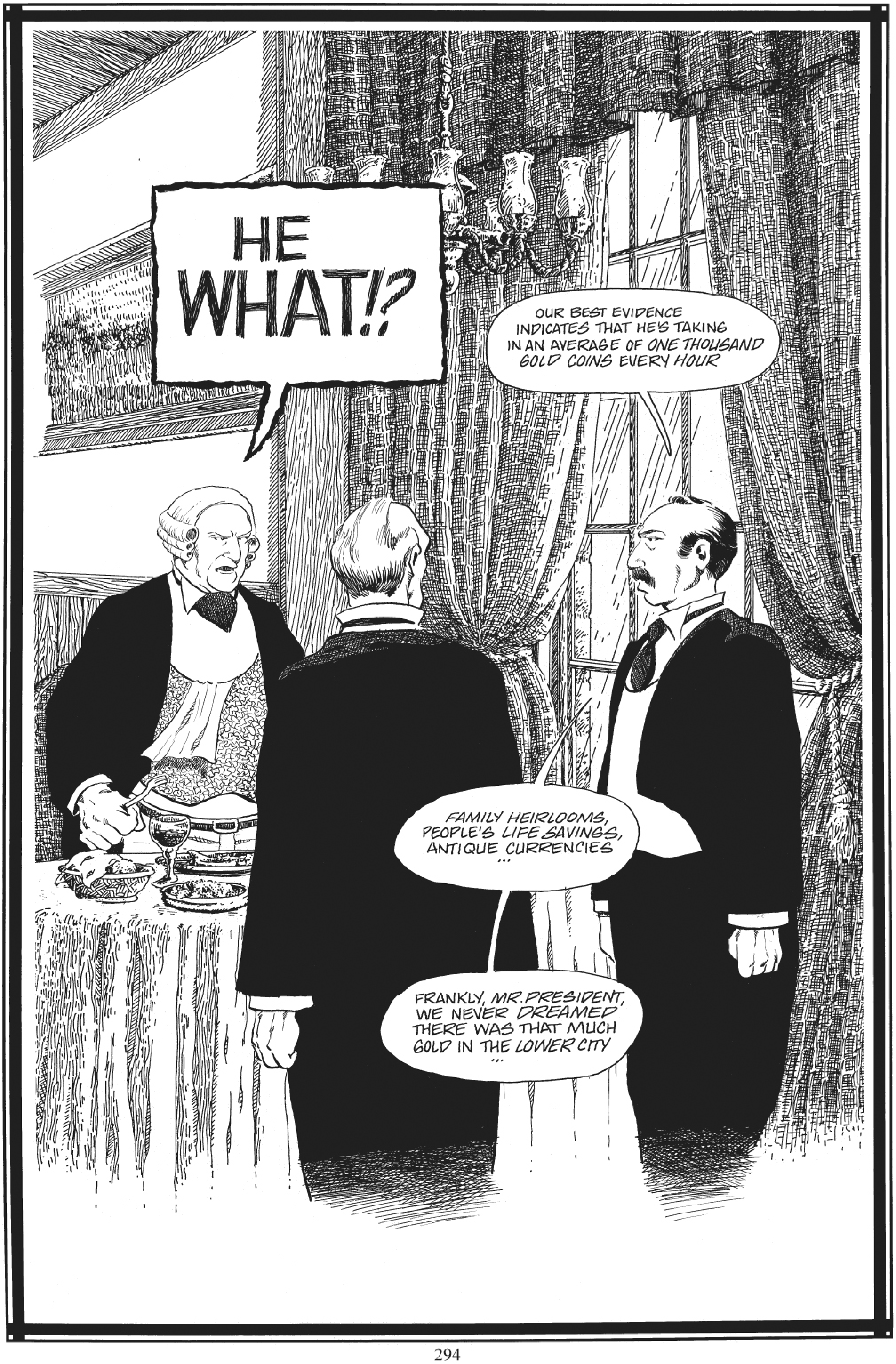

SOB MOLTEN LEAD! SOBSOB I CAN'T EVEN STAND TAKING HOT BATHS!
THERE, THERE LORD DRASER --TRY TO LOOK ON THE BRIGHT SIDE...

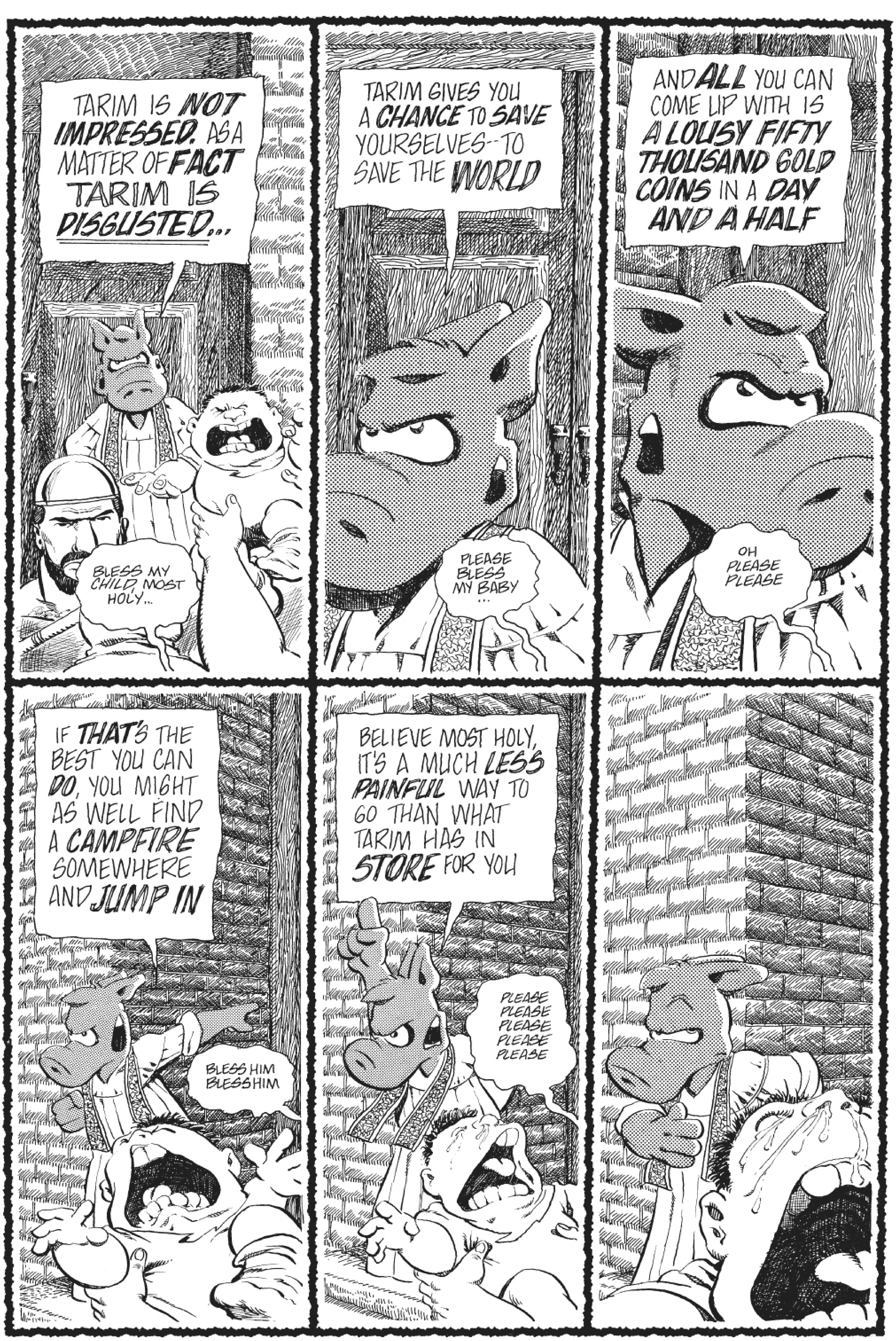
Next QUESTIONS and ANSWERS

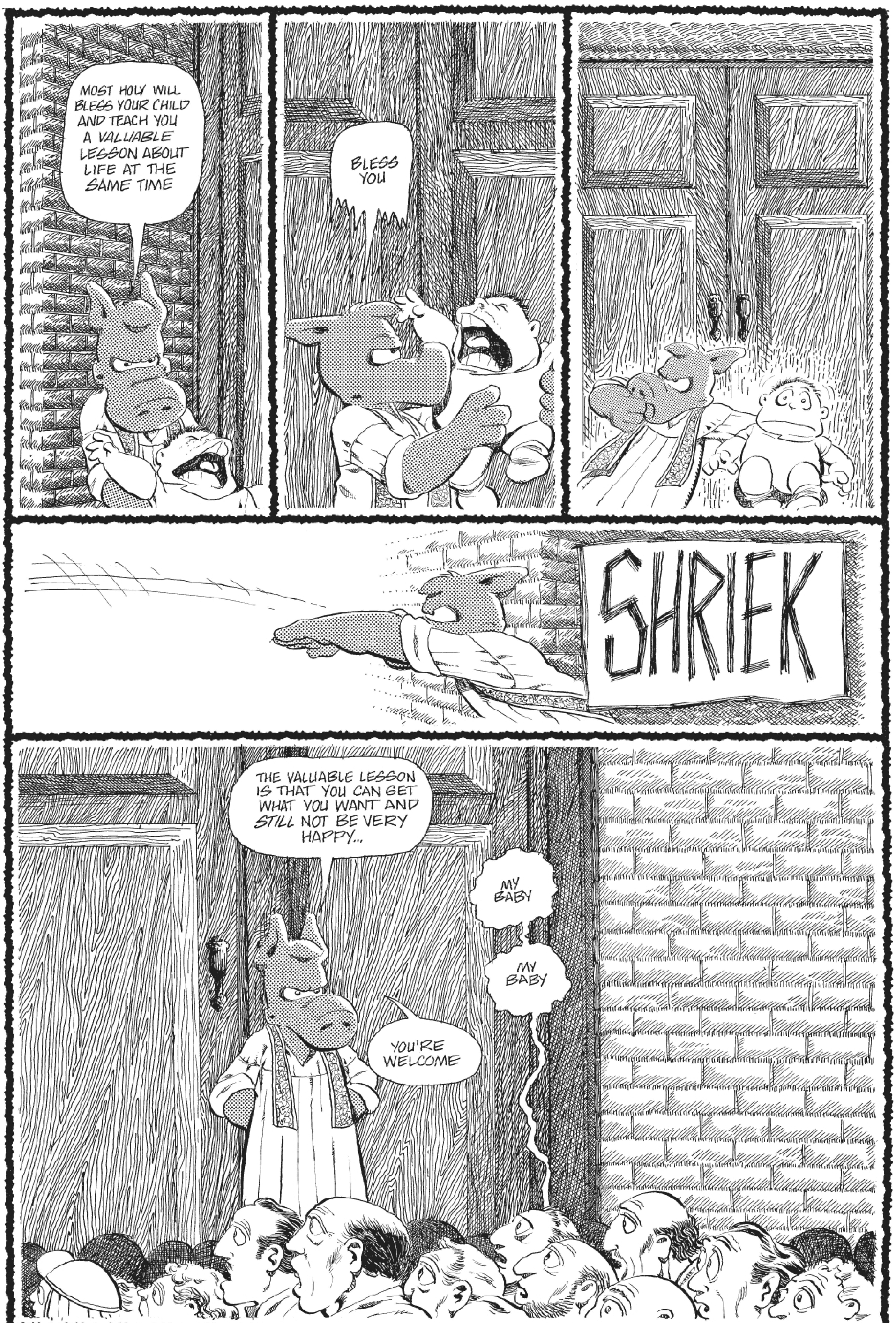
THE THRILL of agony and the VICTORY of defeat

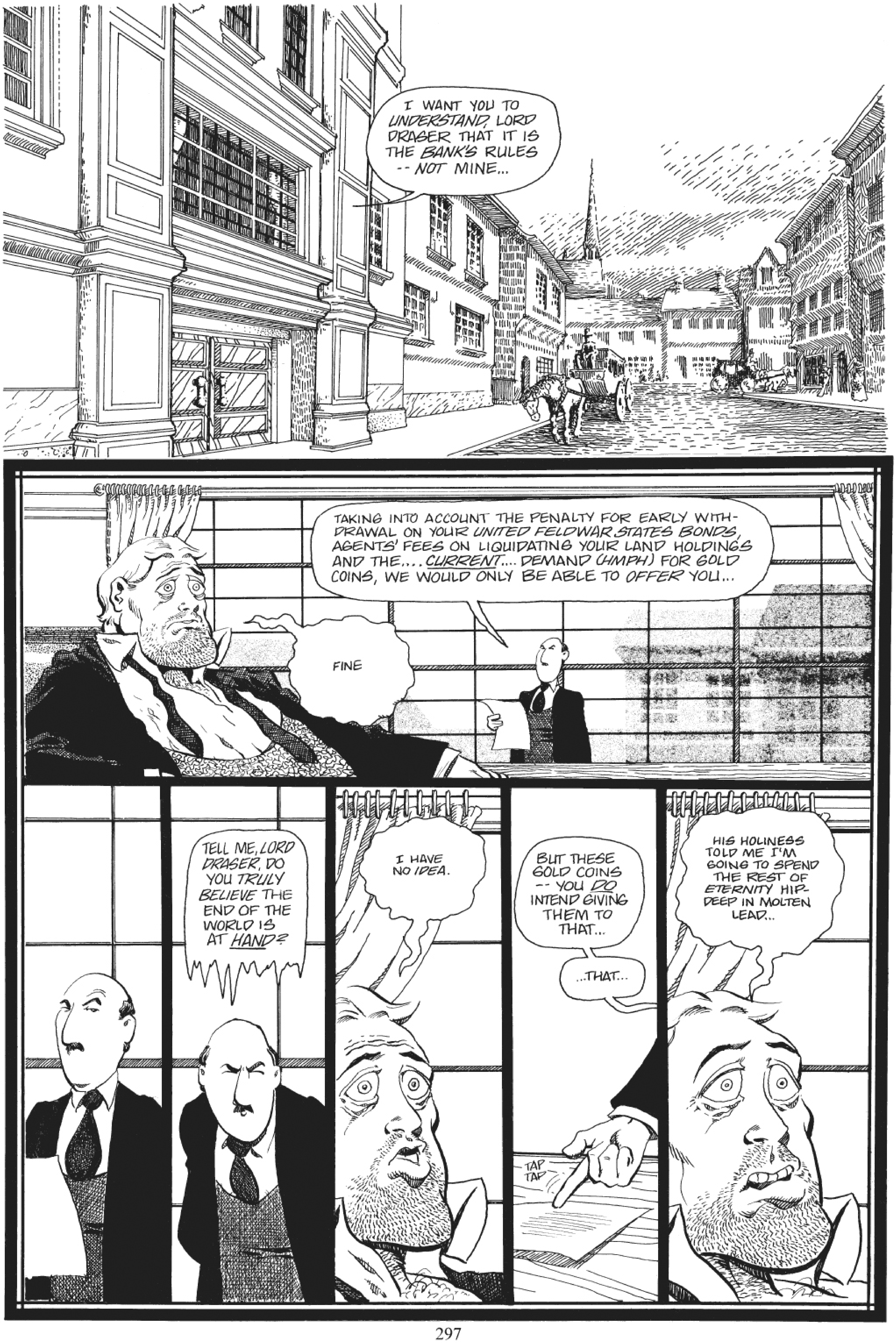

HE WHAT?
HE'S ANNOUNCED THAT TARIM INTENDS TO DESTROY THE WORLD BY FIRE IN *FIFTEEN DAYS*...
UNLESS TARIM GETS ENOUGH *GOLD*...

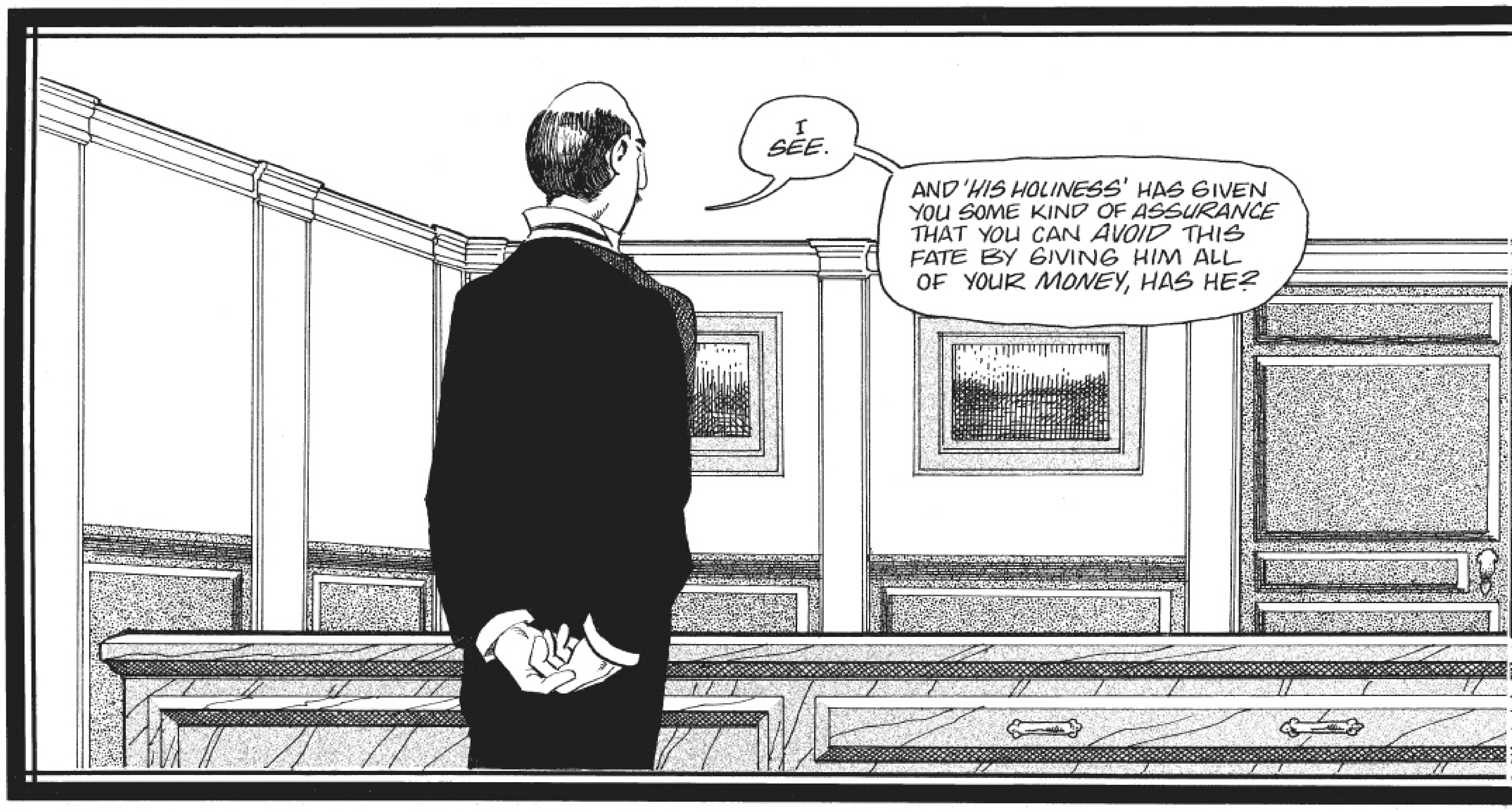
BACKGROUNDS BY GERHARD

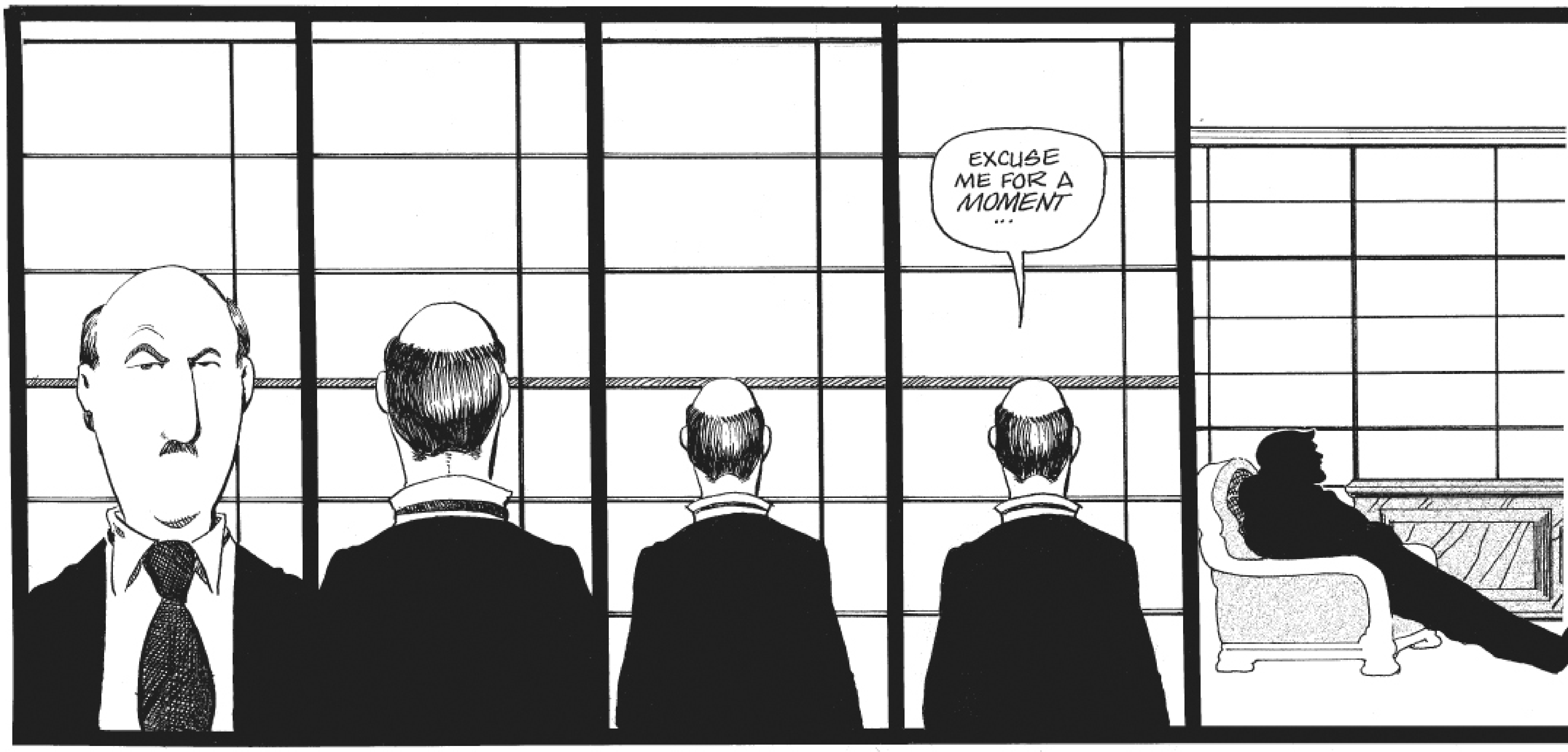

HE WHAT!?
OUR BEST EVIDENCE INDICATES THAT HE'S TAKING IN AN AVERAGE OF *ONE THOUSAND* GOLD COINS EVERY *HOUR*
FAMILY HEIRLOOMS, PEOPLE'S LIFE SAVINGS, ANTIQUE CURRENCIES ...
FRANKLY, *MR. PRESIDENT,* WE NEVER *DREAMED* THERE WAS THAT MUCH GOLD IN THE *LOWER CITY* ...

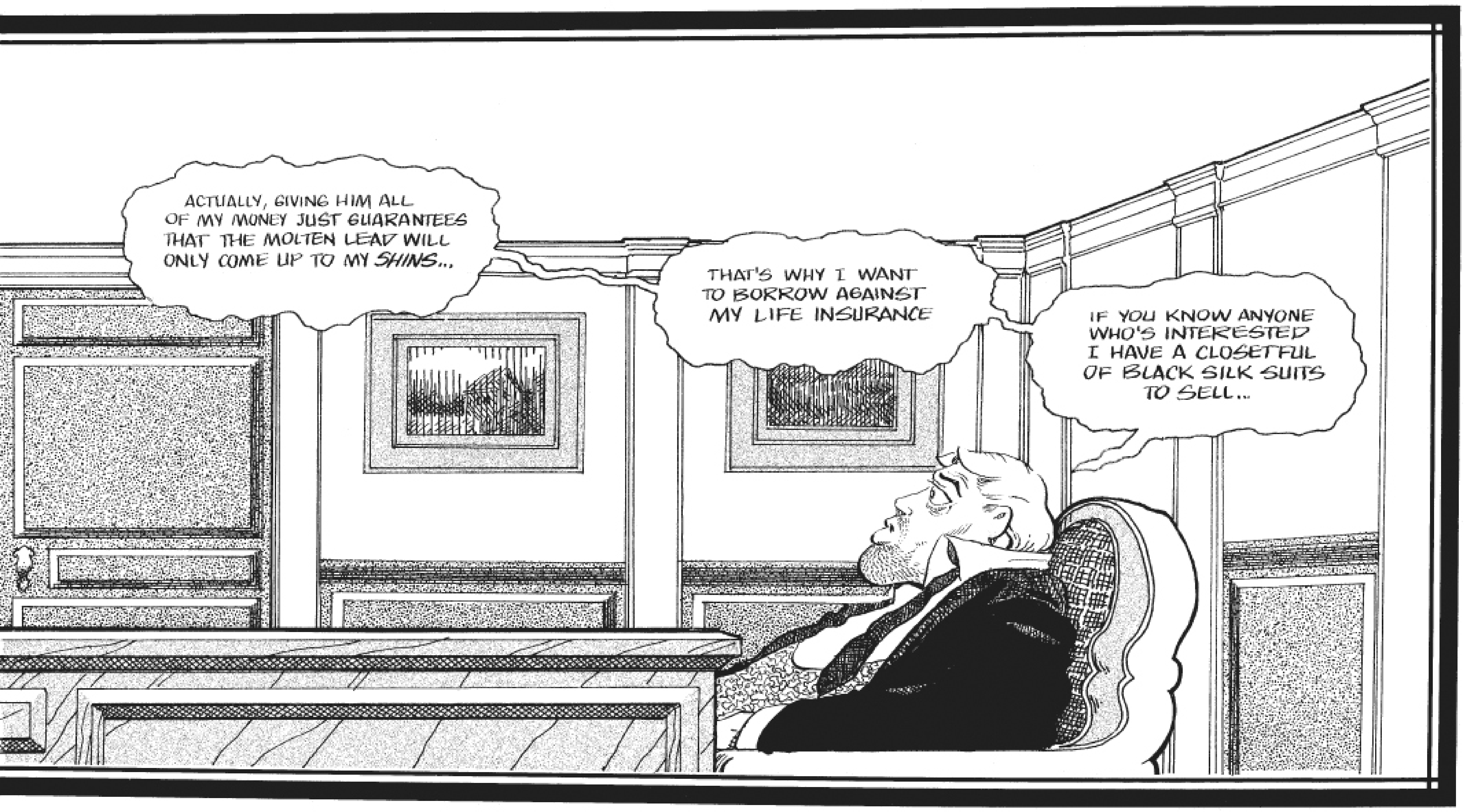

TARIM IS NOT IMPRESSED. AS A MATTER OF FACT TARIM IS DISGUSTED...
BLESS MY CHILD, MOST HOLY...
TARIM GIVES YOU A CHANCE TO SAVE YOURSELVES--TO SAVE THE WORLD
PLEASE BLESS MY BABY ...
AND ALL YOU CAN COME UP WITH IS A LOUSY FIFTY THOUSAND GOLD COINS IN A DAY AND A HALF
OH PLEASE PLEASE
IF THAT'S THE BEST YOU CAN DO, YOU MIGHT AS WELL FIND A CAMPFIRE SOMEWHERE AND JUMP IN
BLESS HIM BLESS HIM
BELIEVE MOST HOLY, IT'S A MUCH LESS PAINFUL WAY TO GO THAN WHAT TARIM HAS IN STORE FOR YOU
PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE

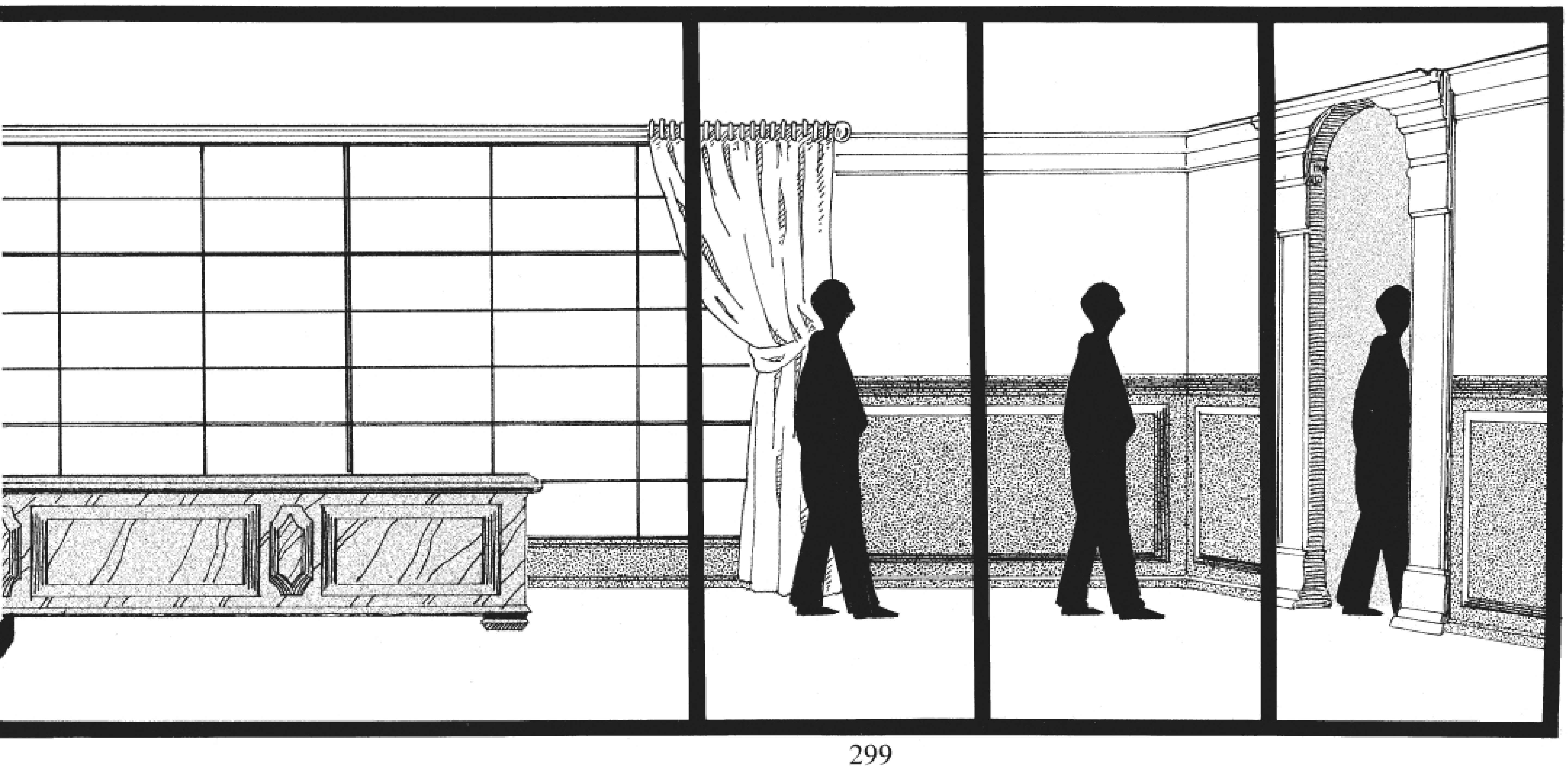

MOST HOLY WILL BLESS YOUR CHILD AND TEACH YOU A VALUABLE LESSON ABOUT LIFE AT THE SAME TIME
BLESS YOU
SHRIEK
THE VALUABLE LESSON IS THAT YOU CAN GET WHAT YOU WANT AND STILL NOT BE VERY HAPPY...
MY BABY
MY BABY
YOU'RE WELCOME

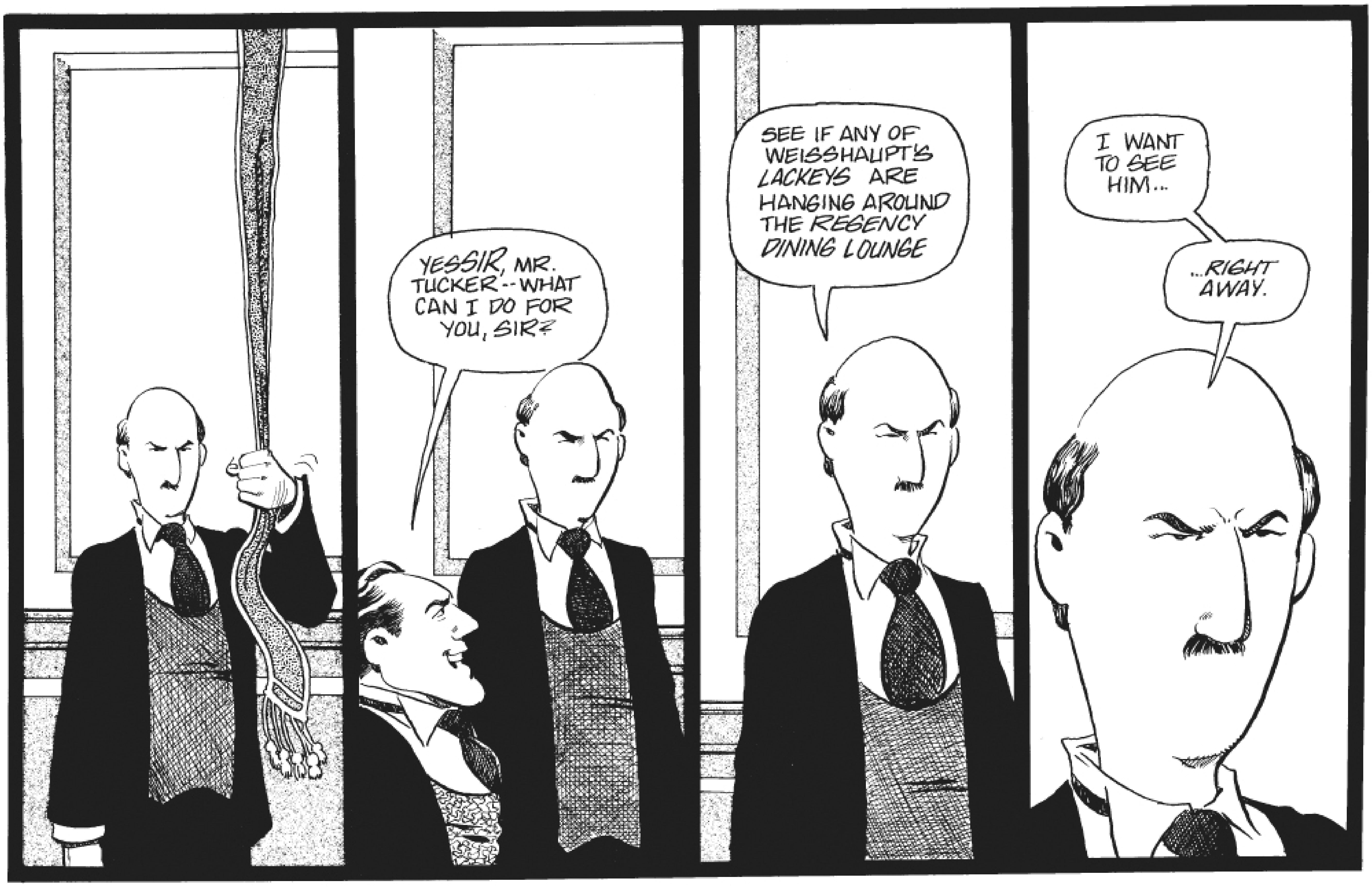

I WANT YOU TO *UNDERSTAND*, LORD DRASER THAT IT IS THE *BANK'S* RULES -- *NOT* MINE...
TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE PENALTY FOR EARLY WITHDRAWAL ON YOUR *UNITED FELDWAR STATES BONDS*, AGENTS' FEES ON LIQUIDATING YOUR LAND HOLDINGS AND THE.... *CURRENT*.... DEMAND (HMPH) FOR GOLD COINS, WE WOULD ONLY BE ABLE TO *OFFER* YOU...
FINE
TELL ME, *LORD DRASER*, DO YOU *TRULY BELIEVE* THE END OF THE WORLD IS AT *HAND*?
I HAVE NO *IDEA*.
BUT THESE GOLD COINS -- YOU *DO* INTEND GIVING THEM TO THAT...
...THAT...
TAP TAP
HIS HOLINESS TOLD ME I'M GOING TO SPEND THE REST OF *ETERNITY* HIP-DEEP IN MOLTEN LEAD...

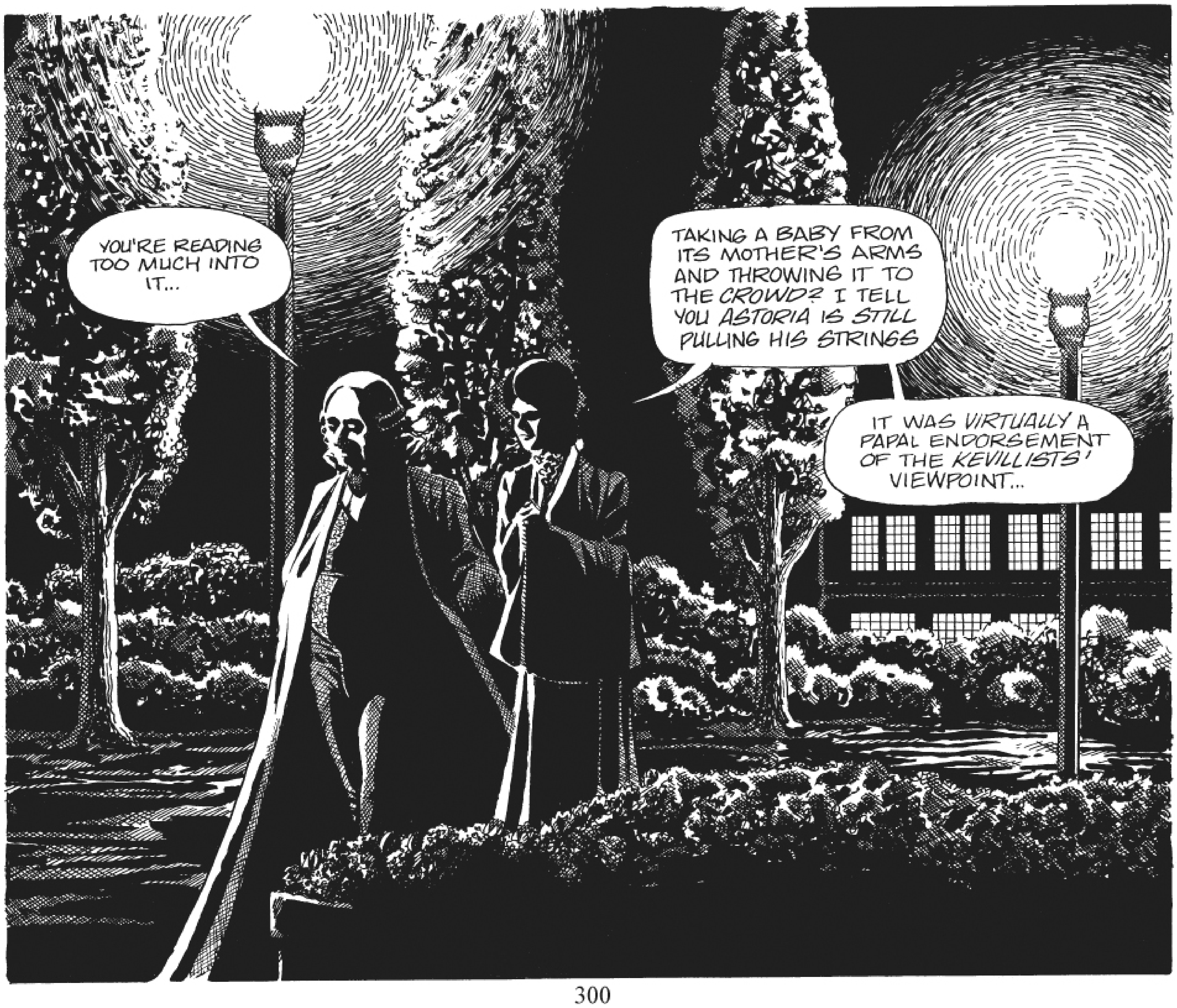

I SEE.
AND 'HIS HOLINESS' HAS GIVEN YOU SOME KIND OF ASSURANCE THAT YOU CAN AVOID THIS FATE BY GIVING HIM ALL OF YOUR MONEY, HAS HE?

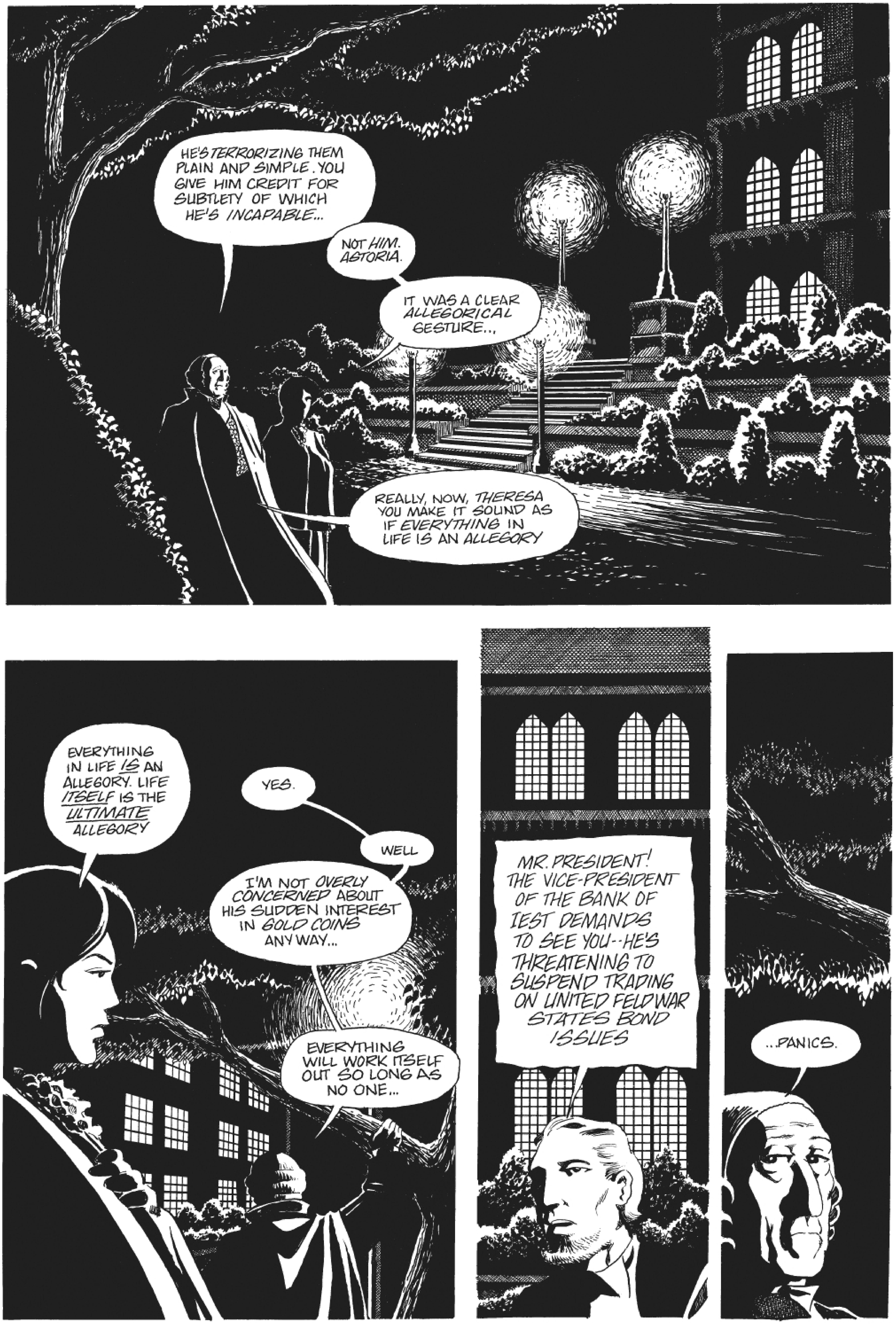

EXCUSE ME FOR A MOMENT ...

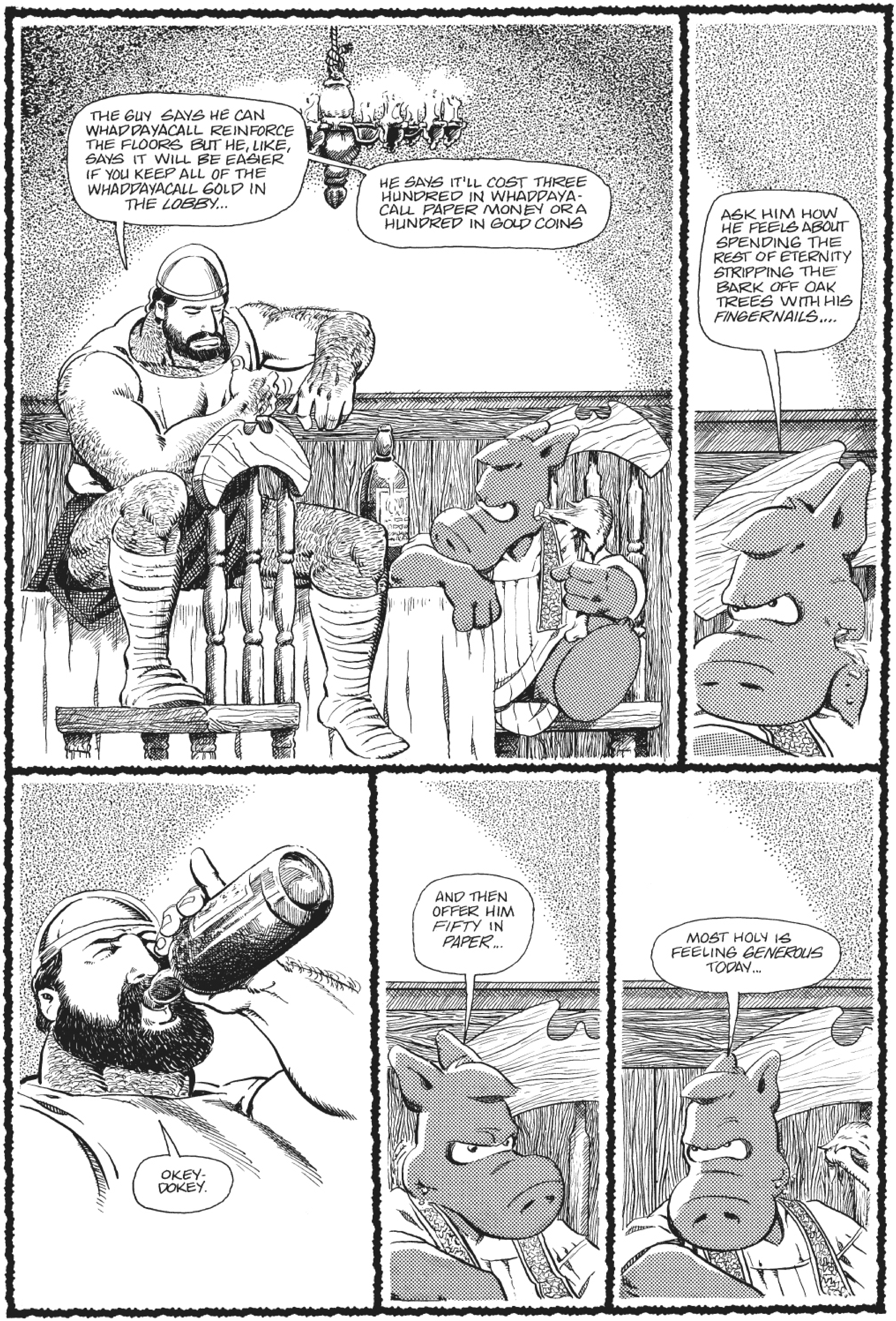

ACTUALLY, GIVING HIM ALL OF MY MONEY JUST GUARANTEES THAT THE MOLTEN LEAD WILL ONLY COME UP TO MY *SHINS*...
THAT'S WHY I WANT TO BORROW AGAINST MY LIFE INSURANCE
IF YOU KNOW ANYONE WHO'S INTERESTED I HAVE A CLOSETFUL OF BLACK SILK SUITS TO SELL...

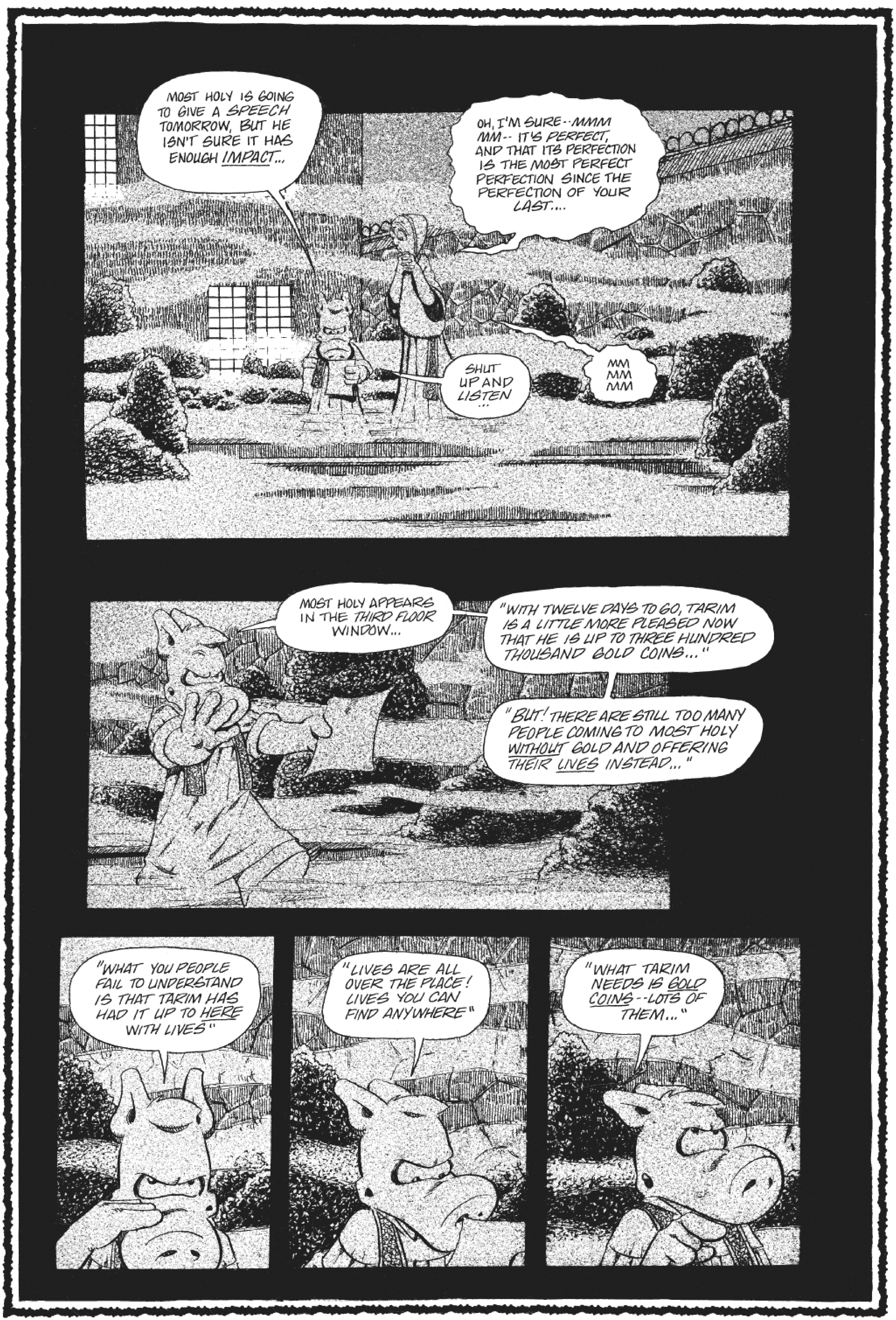


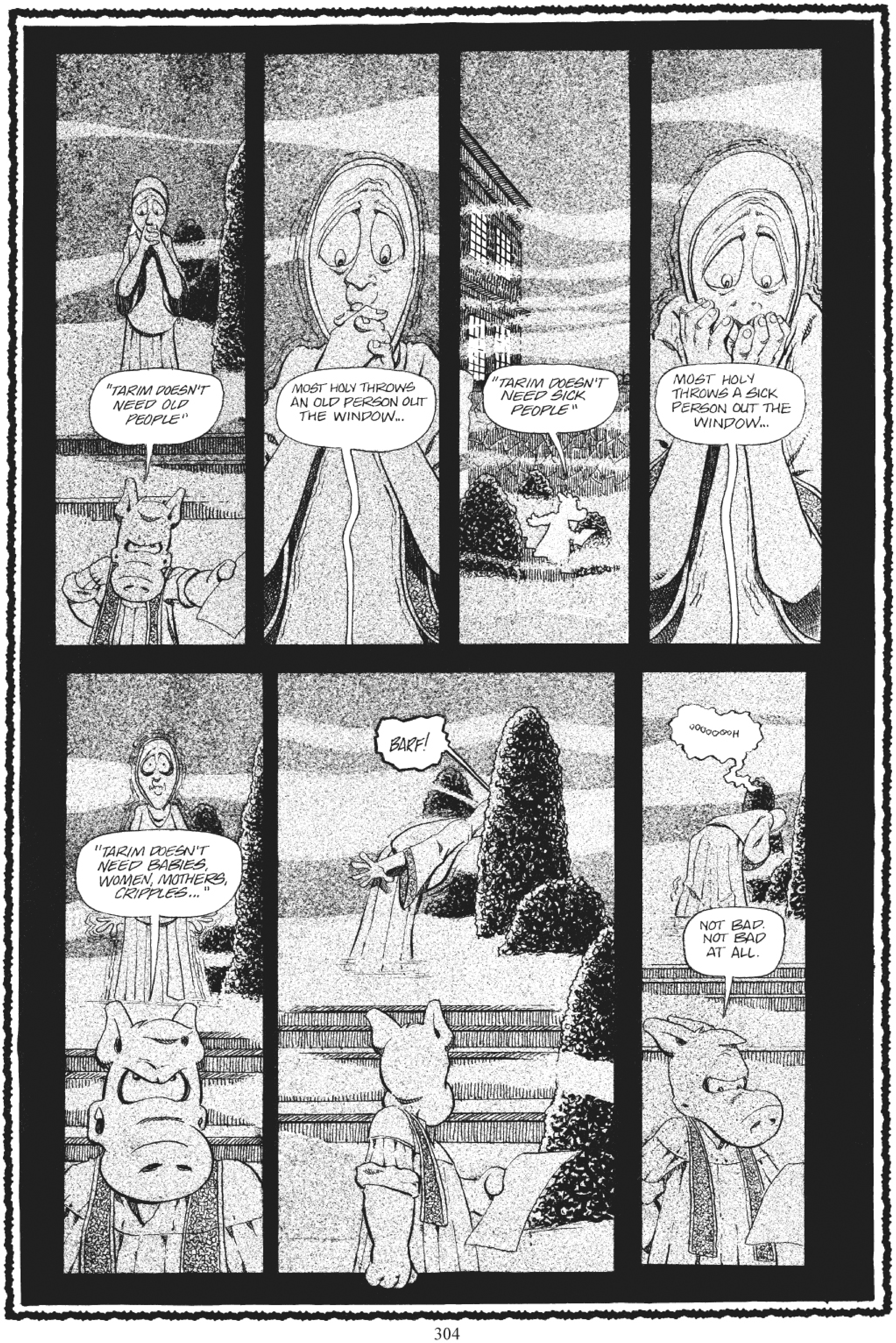

YESSIR, MR. TUCKER--WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU, SIR?
SEE IF ANY OF WEISSHAUPT'S LACKEYS ARE HANGING AROUND THE REGENCY DINING LOUNGE
I WANT TO SEE HIM...
...RIGHT AWAY.

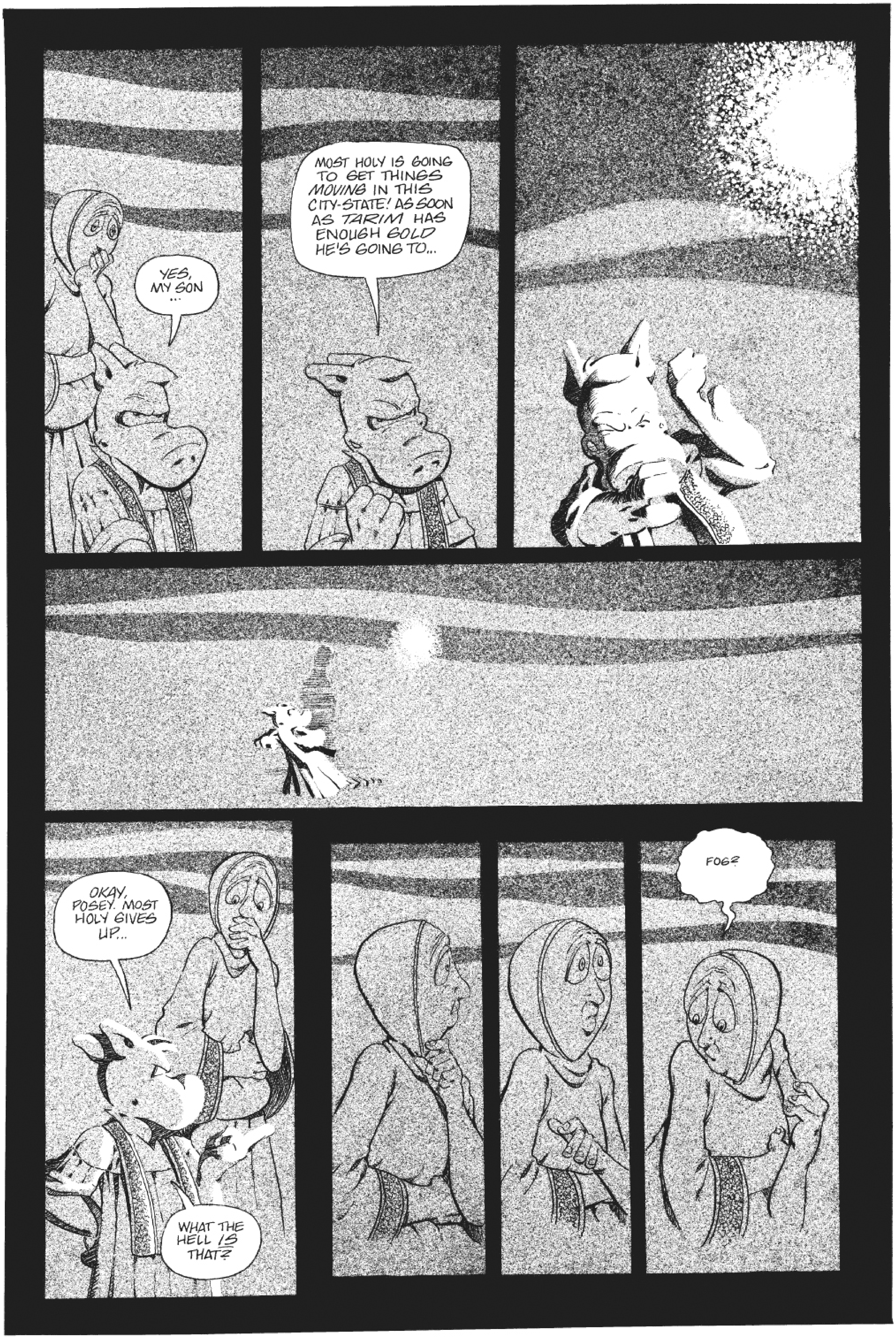

YOU'RE READING TOO MUCH INTO IT...
TAKING A BABY FROM ITS MOTHER'S ARMS AND THROWING IT TO THE CROWD? I TELL YOU ASTORIA IS STILL PULLING HIS STRINGS
IT WAS VIRTUALLY A PAPAL ENDORSEMENT OF THE KEVILLISTS' VIEWPOINT...

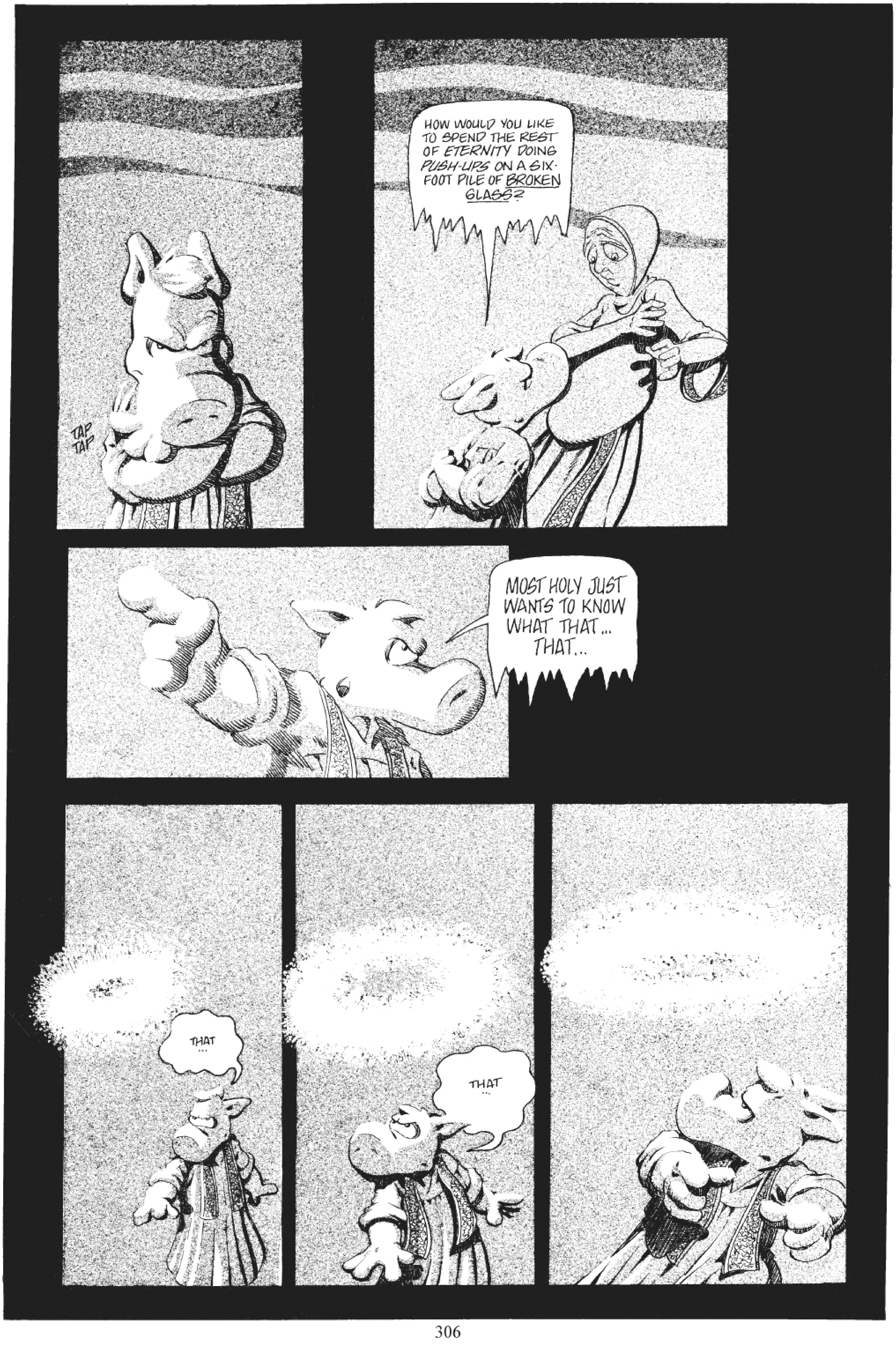

HE'S TERRORIZING THEM PLAIN AND SIMPLE. YOU GIVE HIM CREDIT FOR SUBTLETY OF WHICH HE'S INCAPABLE...
NOT HIM. ASTORIA.
IT WAS A CLEAR ALLEGORICAL GESTURE...
REALLY, NOW, THERESA YOU MAKE IT SOUND AS IF EVERYTHING IN LIFE IS AN ALLEGORY
EVERYTHING IN LIFE IS AN ALLEGORY. LIFE ITSELF IS THE ULTIMATE ALLEGORY
YES.
WELL
I'M NOT OVERLY CONCERNED ABOUT HIS SUDDEN INTEREST IN GOLD COINS ANYWAY...
EVERYTHING WILL WORK ITSELF OUT SO LONG AS NO ONE...
MR. PRESIDENT! THE VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE BANK OF IEST DEMANDS TO SEE YOU--HE'S THREATENING TO SUSPEND TRADING ON UNITED FELDWAR STATES BOND ISSUES
...PANICS.

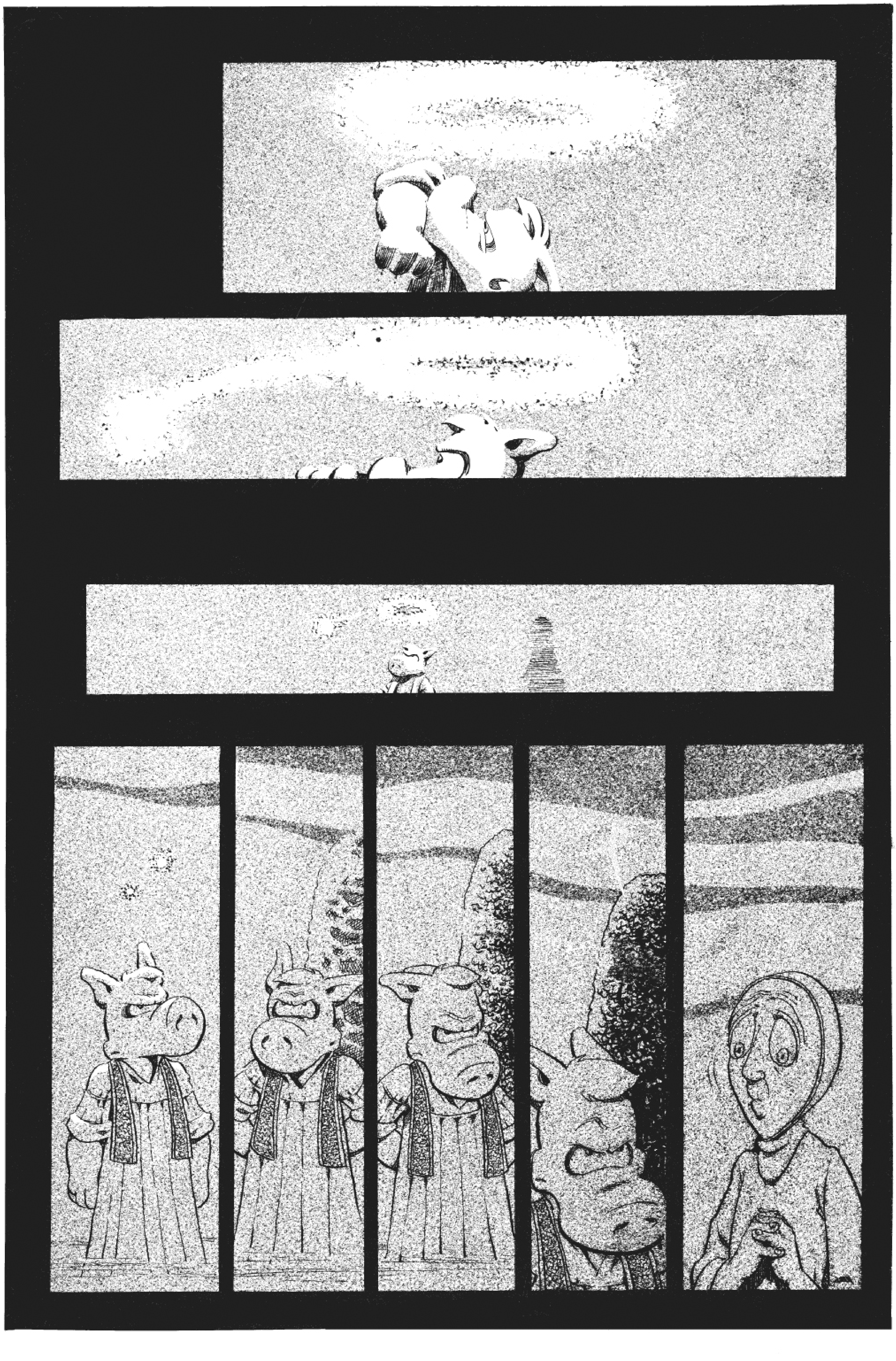

THE GUY SAYS HE CAN WHADDAYACALL REINFORCE THE FLOORS BUT HE, LIKE, SAYS IT WILL BE EASIER IF YOU KEEP ALL OF THE WHADDAYACALL GOLD IN THE *LOBBY*...
HE SAYS IT'LL COST THREE HUNDRED IN WHADDAYA-CALL PAPER MONEY OR A HUNDRED IN GOLD COINS
ASK HIM HOW HE FEELS ABOUT SPENDING THE REST OF ETERNITY STRIPPING THE BARK OFF OAK TREES WITH HIS *FINGERNAILS*....
OKEY-DOKEY.
AND THEN OFFER HIM *FIFTY* IN *PAPER*...
MOST HOLY IS FEELING *GENEROUS* TODAY...

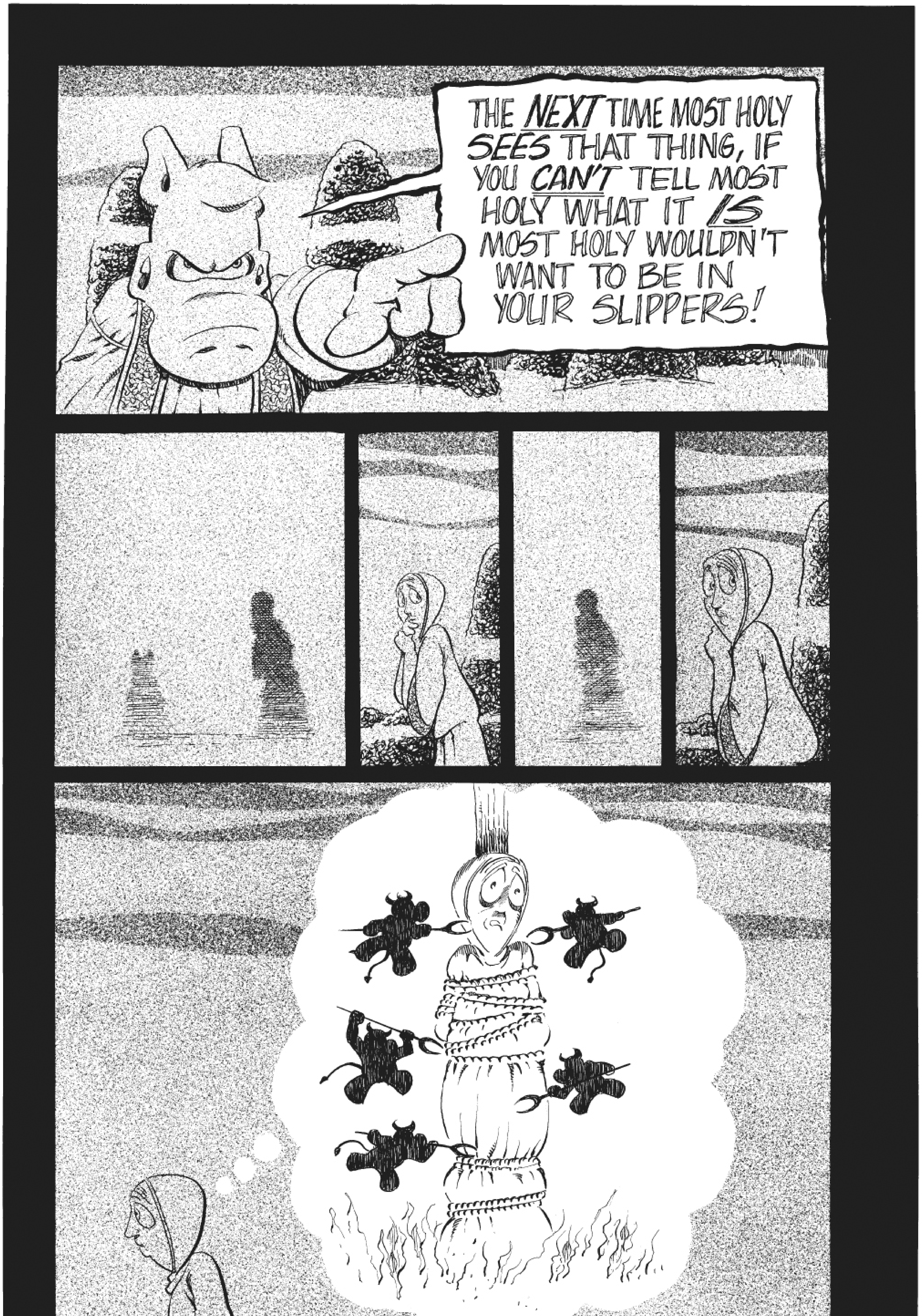

MOST HOLY IS GOING TO GIVE A SPEECH TOMORROW, BUT HE ISN'T SURE IT HAS ENOUGH IMPACT...
OH, I'M SURE-- MMM MM-- IT'S PERFECT, AND THAT ITS PERFECTION IS THE MOST PERFECT PERFECTION SINCE THE PERFECTION OF YOUR LAST....
SHUT UP AND LISTEN ...
MM MM MM
MOST HOLY APPEARS IN THE THIRD FLOOR WINDOW...
"WITH TWELVE DAYS TO GO, TARIM IS A LITTLE MORE PLEASED NOW THAT HE IS UP TO THREE HUNDRED THOUSAND GOLD COINS..."
"BUT! THERE ARE STILL TOO MANY PEOPLE COMING TO MOST HOLY WITHOUT GOLD AND OFFERING THEIR LIVES INSTEAD..."
"WHAT YOU PEOPLE FAIL TO UNDERSTAND IS THAT TARIM HAS HAD IT UP TO HERE WITH LIVES"
"LIVES ARE ALL OVER THE PLACE! LIVES YOU CAN FIND ANYWHERE"
"WHAT TARIM NEEDS IS GOLD COINS--LOTS OF THEM..."

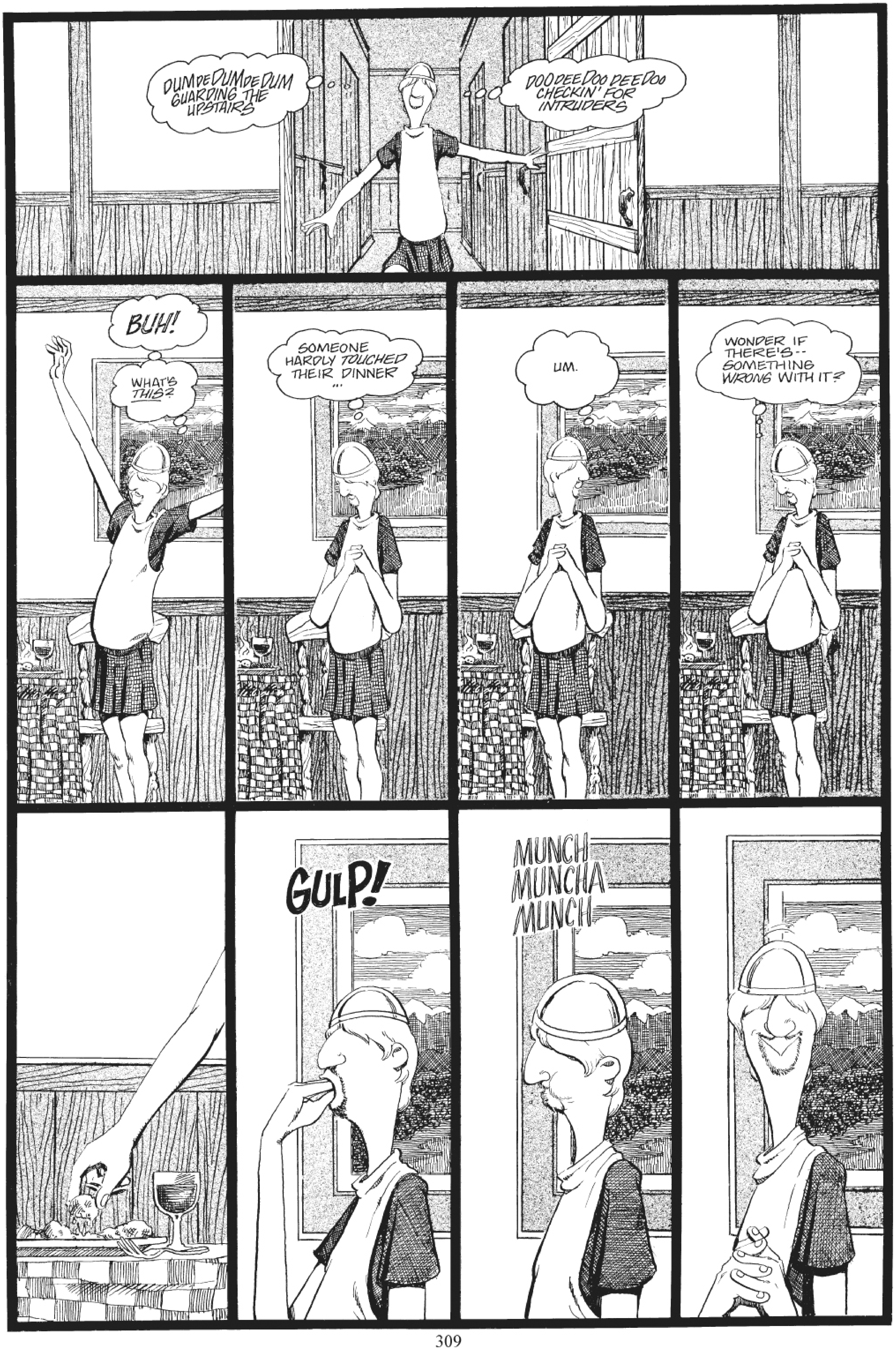

"TARIM DOESN'T NEED OLD PEOPLE"
MOST HOLY THROWS AN OLD PERSON OUT THE WINDOW...
"TARIM DOESN'T NEED SICK PEOPLE"
MOST HOLY THROWS A SICK PERSON OUT THE WINDOW...
"TARIM DOESN'T NEED BABIES, WOMEN, MOTHERS, CRIPPLES..."
BARF!
ooooooooH
NOT BAD. NOT BAD AT ALL.

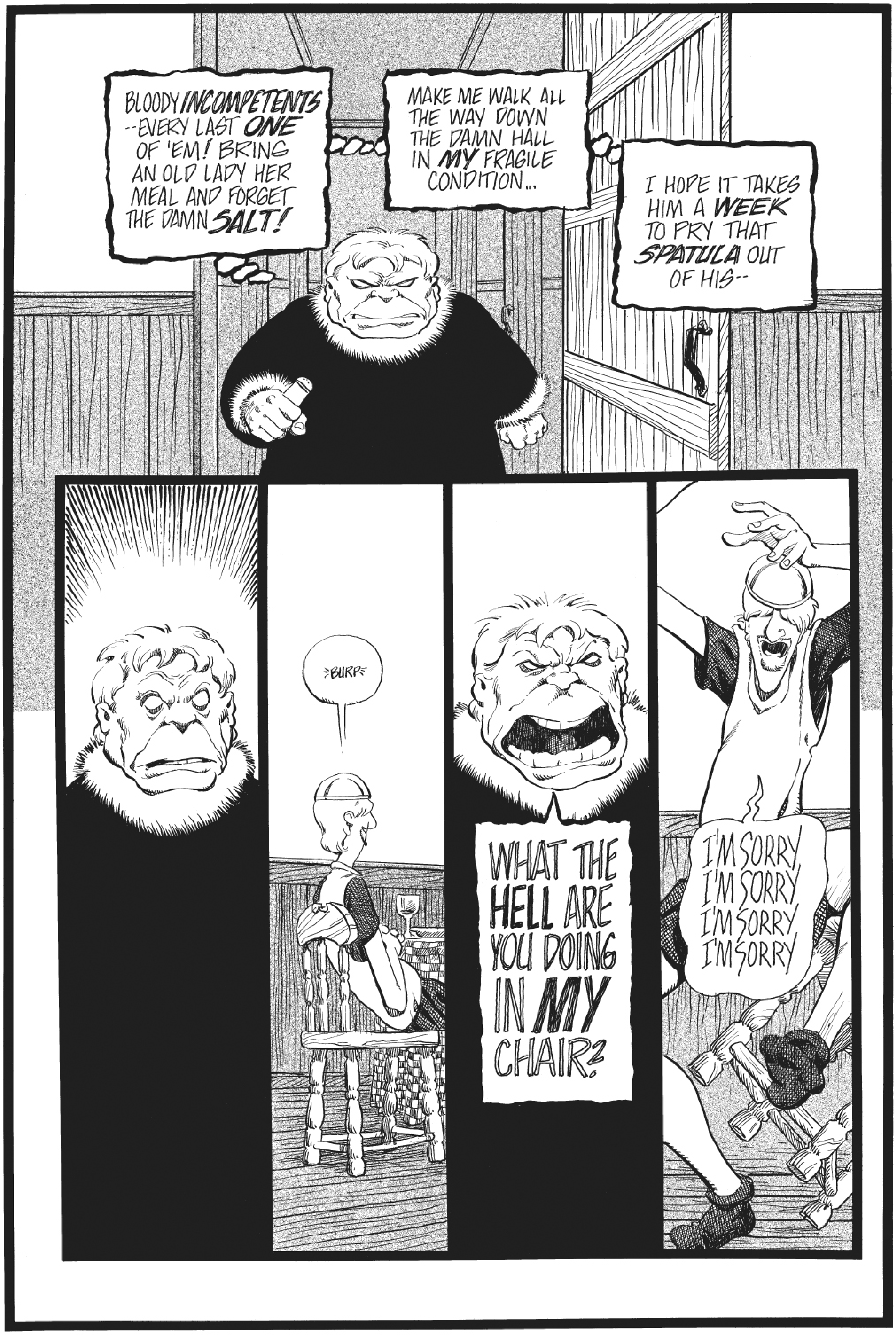

YES, MY SON ...
MOST HOLY IS GOING TO GET THINGS *MOVING* IN THIS CITY-STATE! AS SOON AS *TARIM* HAS ENOUGH *GOLD* HE'S GOING TO...
OKAY, POSEY. MOST HOLY GIVES UP...
WHAT THE HELL *IS* THAT?
FOG?

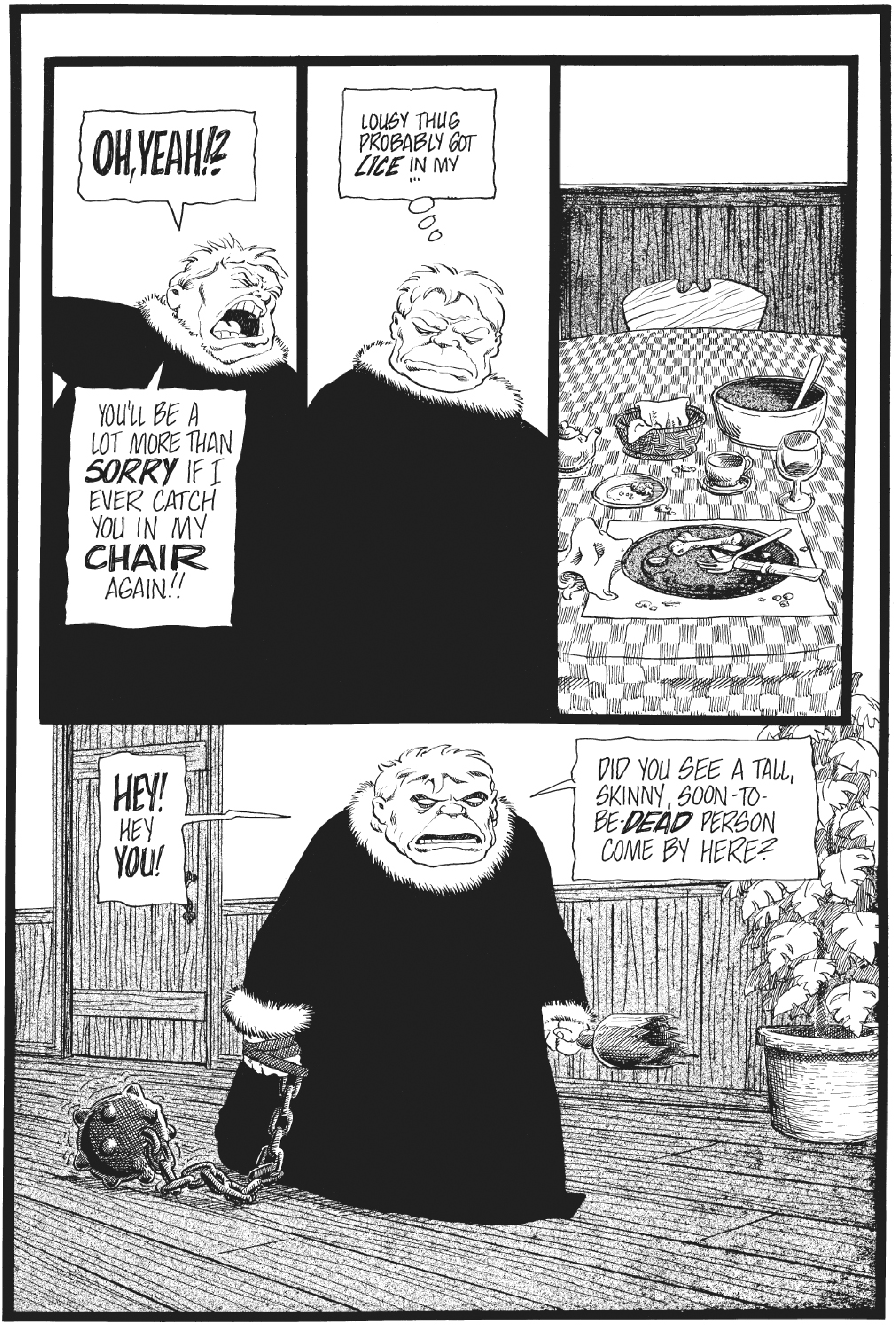

TAP TAP
HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO SPEND THE REST OF ETERNITY DOING PUSH-UPS ON A SIX-FOOT PILE OF BROKEN GLASS?
MOST HOLY JUST WANTS TO KNOW WHAT THAT... THAT...
THAT ...
THAT ...

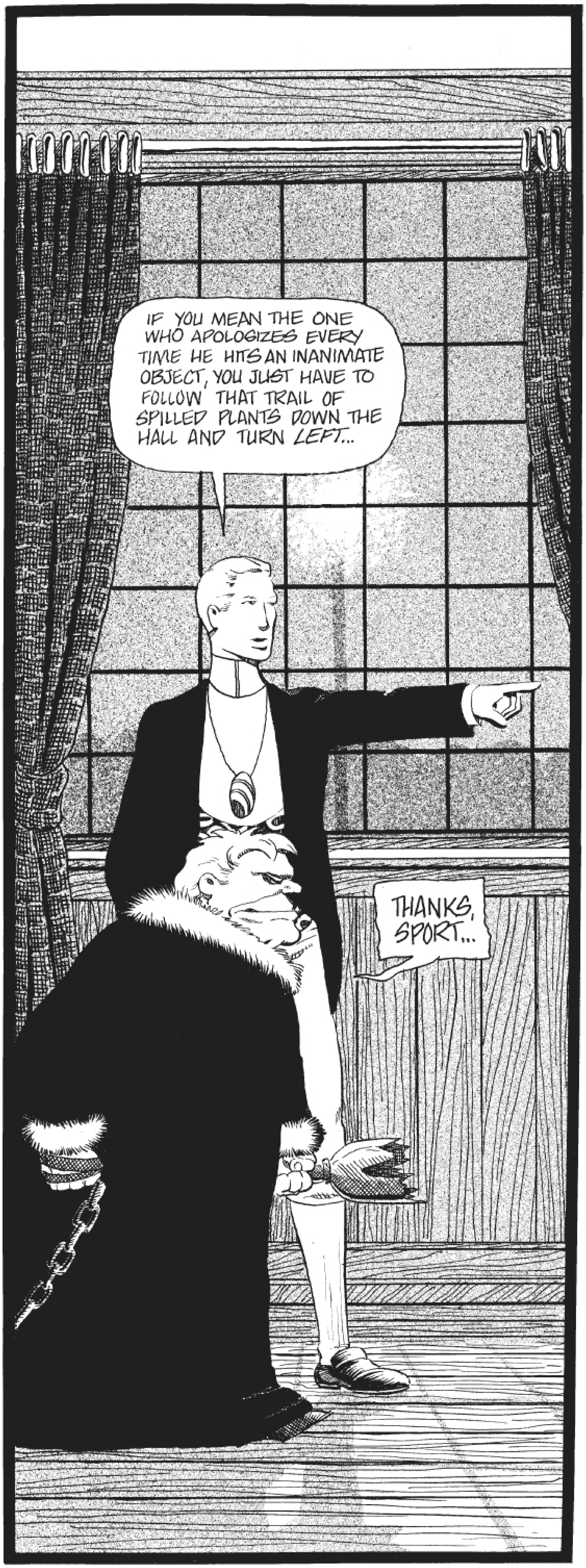



THE NEXT TIME MOST HOLY SEES THAT THING, IF YOU CAN'T TELL MOST HOLY WHAT IT IS MOST HOLY WOULDN'T WANT TO BE IN YOUR SLIPPERS!


DUM DE DUM DE DUM GUARDING THE UPSTAIRS
DOO DEE DOO DEE DOO CHECKIN' FOR INTRUDERS
BUH!
WHAT'S THIS?
SOMEONE HARDLY TOUCHED THEIR DINNER ...
UM.
WONDER IF THERE'S-- SOMETHING WRONG WITH IT?
GULP!
MUNCH MUNCHA MUNCH


BLOODY INCOMPETENTS --EVERY LAST ONE OF 'EM! BRING AN OLD LADY HER MEAL AND FORGET THE DAMN SALT!
MAKE ME WALK ALL THE WAY DOWN THE DAMN HALL IN MY FRAGILE CONDITION...
I HOPE IT TAKES HIM A WEEK TO PRY THAT SPATULA OUT OF HIS--
BURP
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING IN MY CHAIR?
I'M SORRY I'M SORRY I'M SORRY I'M SORRY


OH, YEAH!?
YOU'LL BE A LOT MORE THAN SORRY IF I EVER CATCH YOU IN MY CHAIR AGAIN!!
LOUSY THUG PROBABLY GOT LICE IN MY ...
HEY! HEY YOU!
DID YOU SEE A TALL, SKINNY, SOON-TO-BE-DEAD PERSON COME BY HERE?


IF YOU MEAN THE ONE WHO APOLOGIZES EVERY TIME HE HITS AN INANIMATE OBJECT, YOU JUST HAVE TO FOLLOW THAT TRAIL OF SPILLED PLANTS DOWN THE HALL AND TURN *LEFT*...
THANKS, SPORT...

NEXT

Where he's been and what he's been up to

DAY OF GREATNESS

betrayed Most Holy back in the days when Most Holy wasn't yet officially perfect. Most Holy counted on you and you let Most Holy down. You never came back with the Pigt armies and Most Holy had to resign as Prime Minister and everyone laughed at Most Holy. Before Most Holy decides what he wants to fill your intestines with for the rest of eternity, is there anything you want to tell Most Holy?

Muffins: I told your people that you needed them, Great Cerebus. I told them that the time of Re-emergence was at hand, but Fret Mac Murry had convinced them all in my absence that you were a false Cerebus.

Note: Remind Most Holy - Fret Mac Murry - rest of eternity - honey - nostrils - soldier ants →

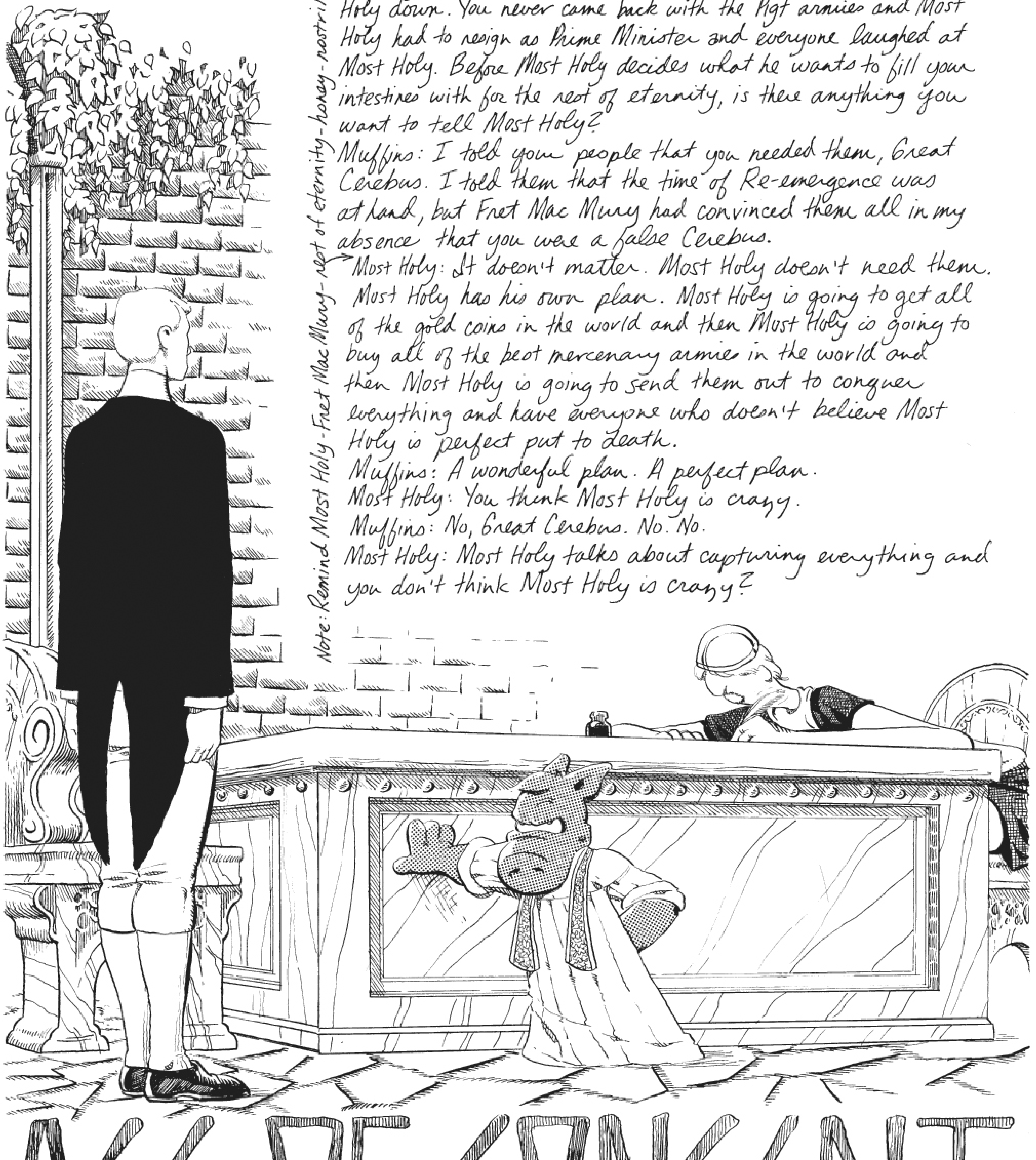
Most Holy: It doesn't matter. Most Holy doesn't need them. Most Holy has his own plan. Most Holy is going to get all of the gold coins in the world and then Most Holy is going to buy all of the best mercenary armies in the world and then Most Holy is going to send them out to conquer everything and have everyone who doesn't believe Most Holy is perfect put to death.

Muffins: A wonderful plan. A perfect plan.

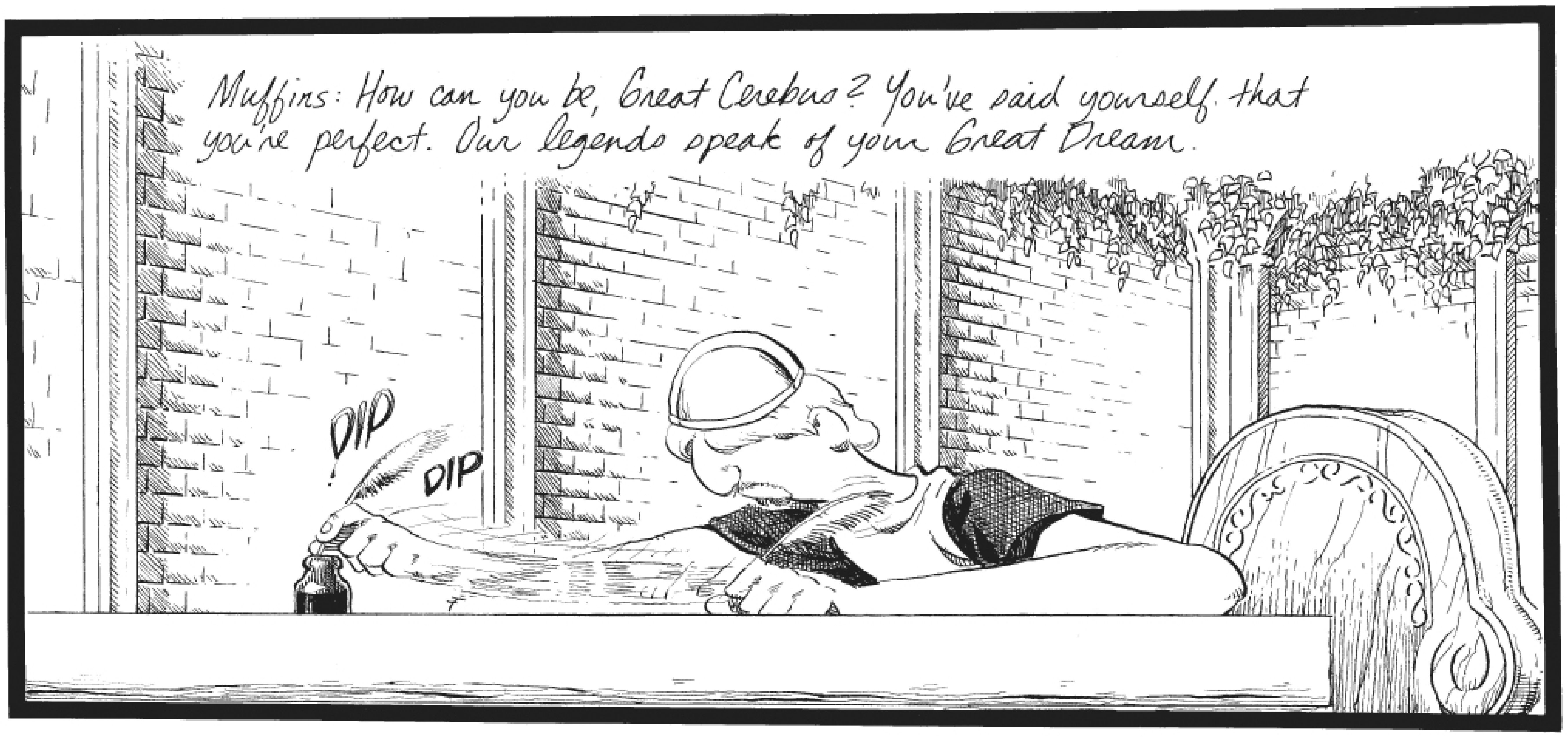
Most Holy: You think Most Holy is crazy.

Muffins: No, Great Cerebus. No. No.

Most Holy: Most Holy talks about capturing everything and you don't think Most Holy is crazy?



AGE OF CONSENT

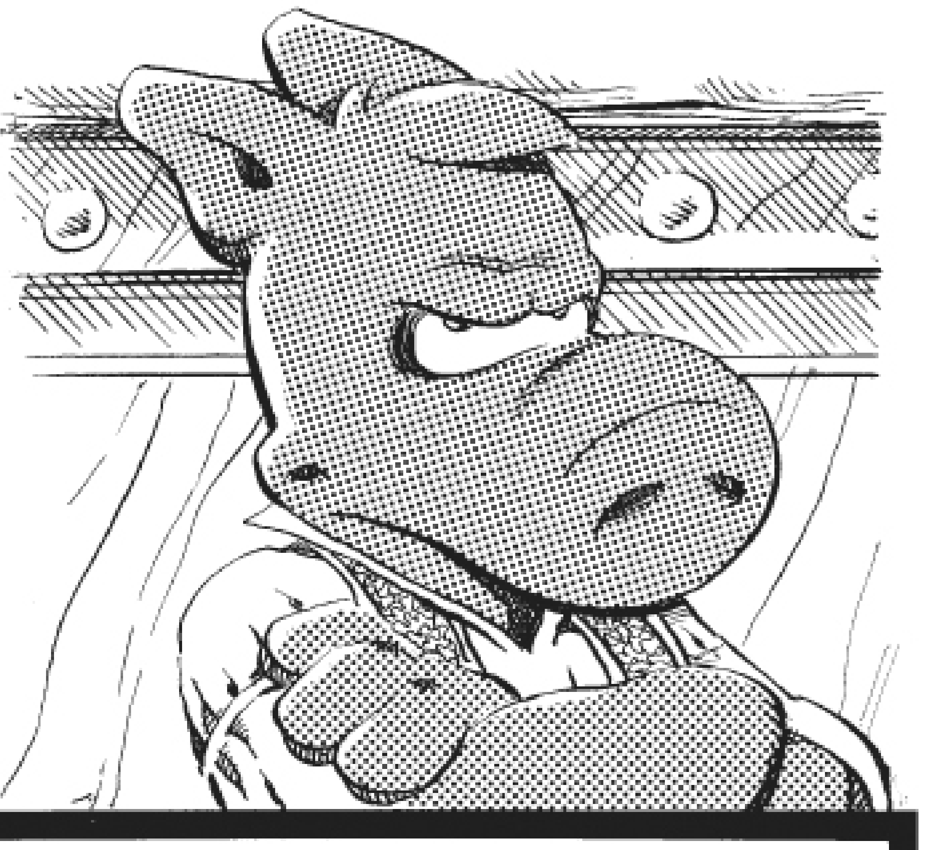


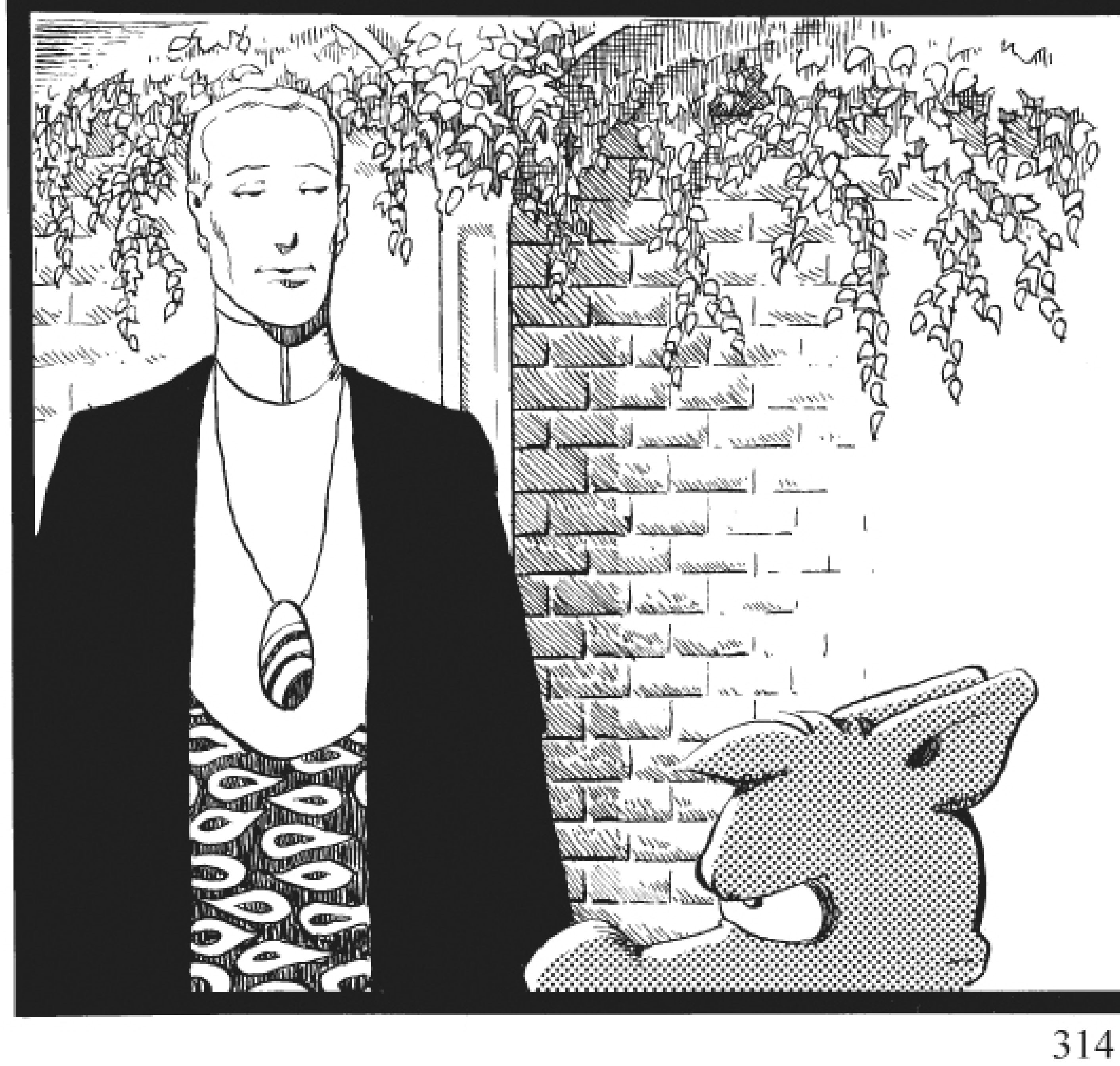
Muffins: How can you be, Great Cerebus? You've said yourself that you're perfect. Our legends speak of your Great Dream.

Most Holy: Cerebus had a dream last night. Cerebus was flying over this body of water and there were these doors all around him, just sort of floating above the water. Up ahead, Cerebus could see this stone column sticking up out of the water and Cerebus flew toward it. When Cerebus got to it, the water had risen almost to the top. There was this stone post and on the post was a box and in the box was a crown. Cerebus tried to grab the crown but a gust of wind came up and blew Cerebus away. Then Cerebus was blown against this big glass door and it broke and Cerebus was stuck. Then the glass door started floating back towards the stone column which turned into a statue of Cerebus. Cerebus kept trying to get out, but he was stuck. As Cerebus got closer to the statue, it started to crumble to pieces. Cerebus thought he was either going to be crushed by one of the falling chunks or squeezed against the statue's forehead.

Muffins: And what happened, Great Cerebus?

Most Holy: Cerebus woke up with a craving for raw potatoes and onion soup.





Muffins: It's a wonderful dream; a perfect dream.

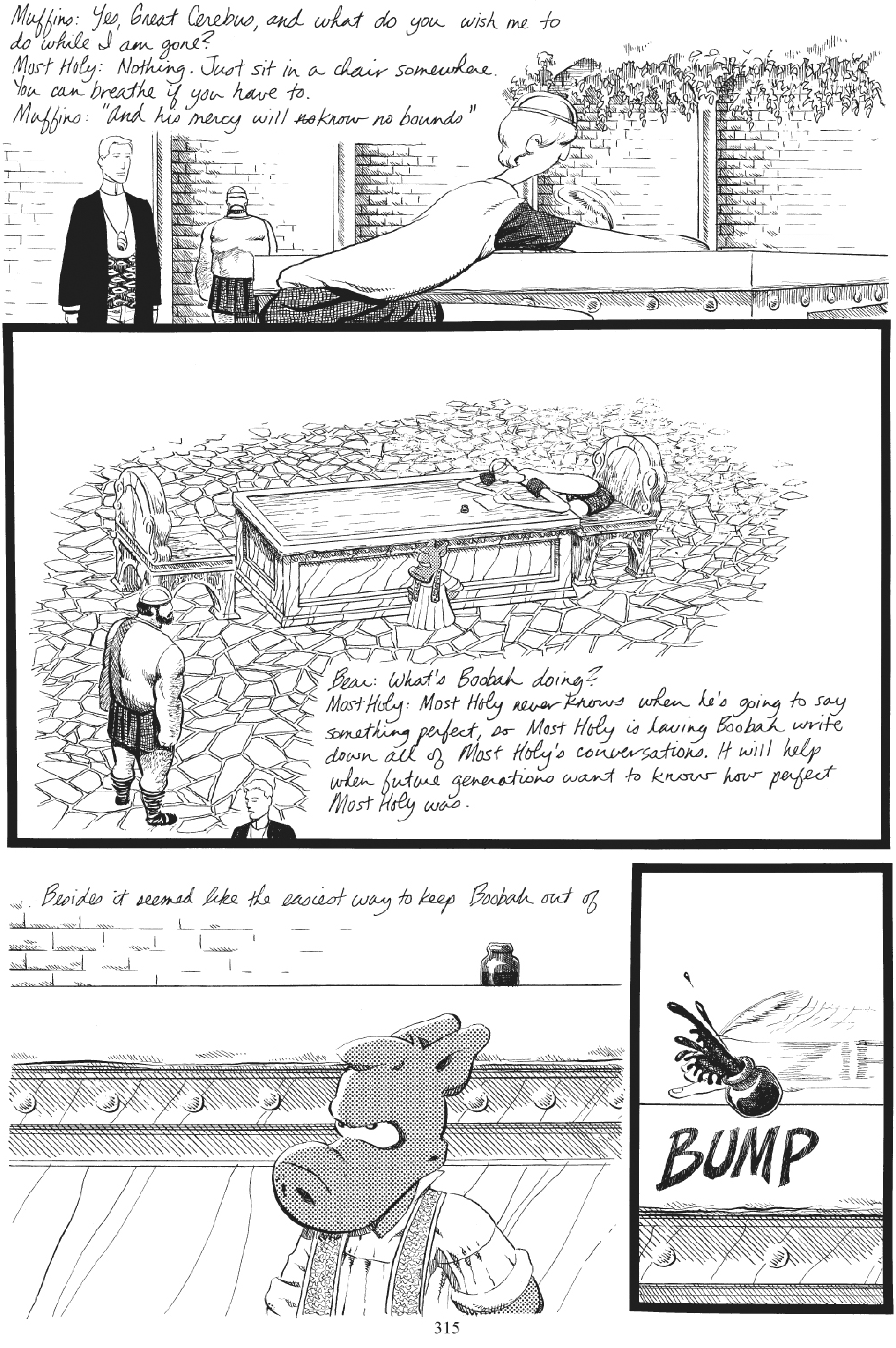
Most Holy: Most Holy was just testing you when he asked if you thought he was crazy.

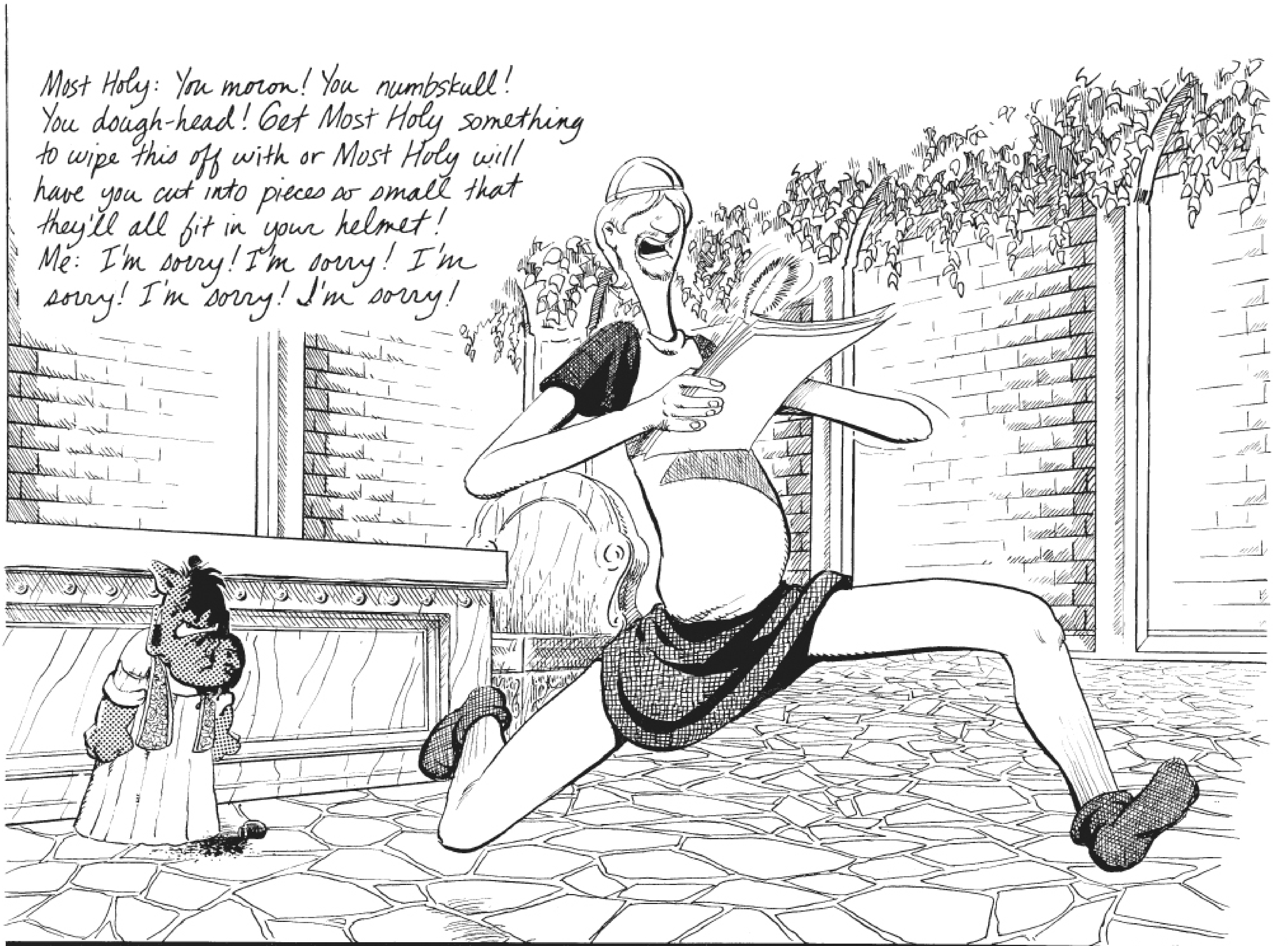
Muffins: Of course, Great Cerebus.

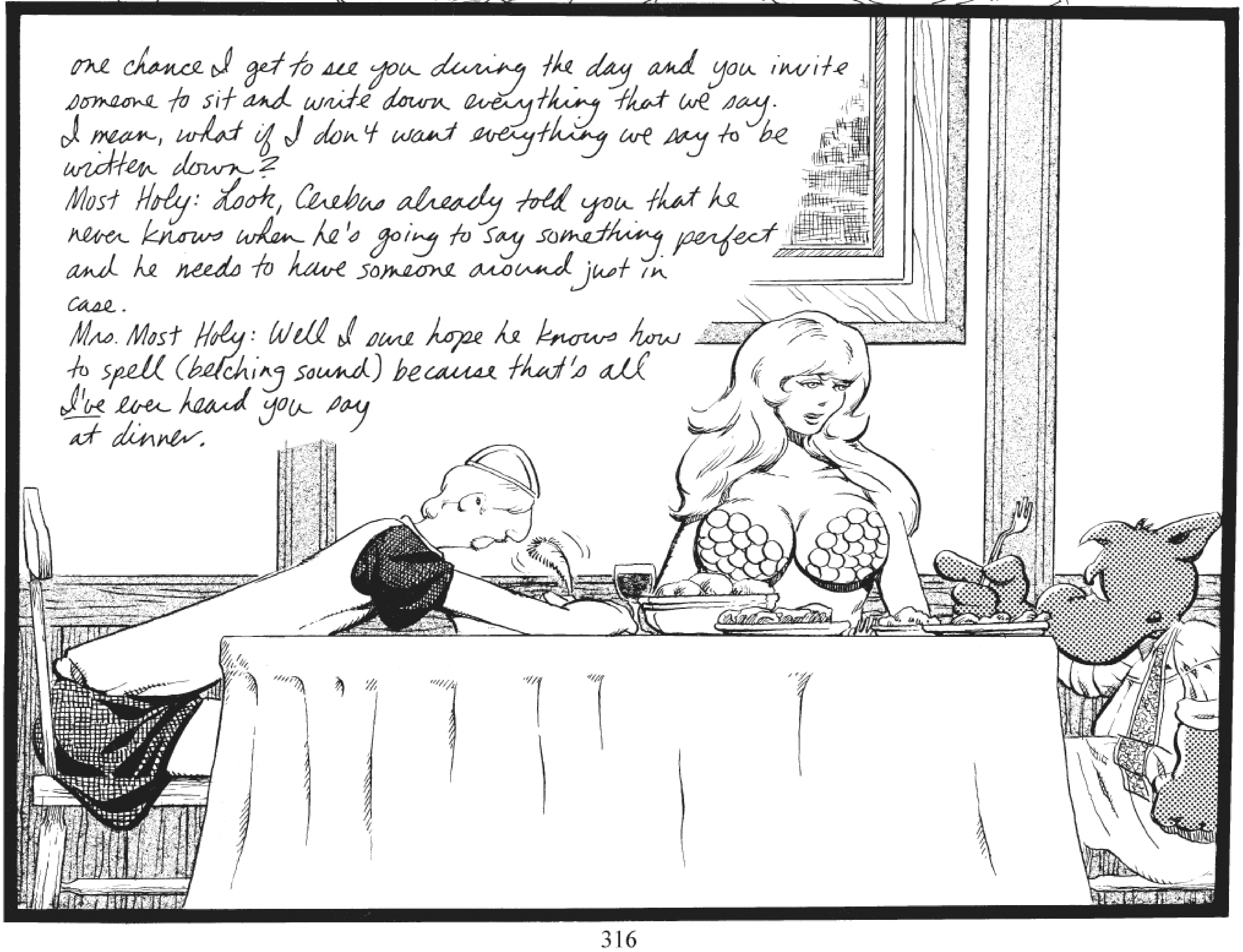
Most Holy: Most Holy would've had your head cut off and made into a footstool if you had said he was.

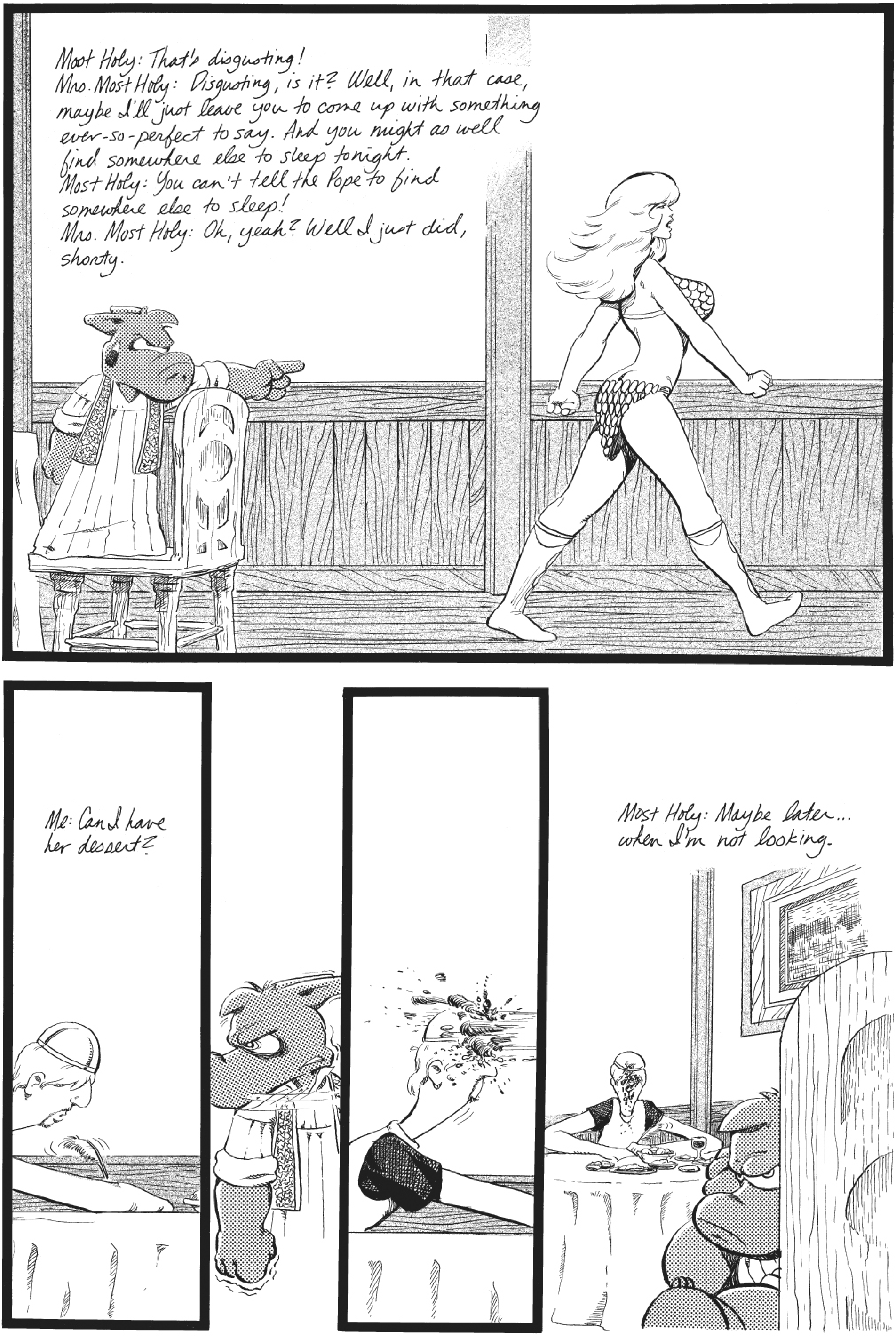
Muffins: I understand, Great Cerebus.

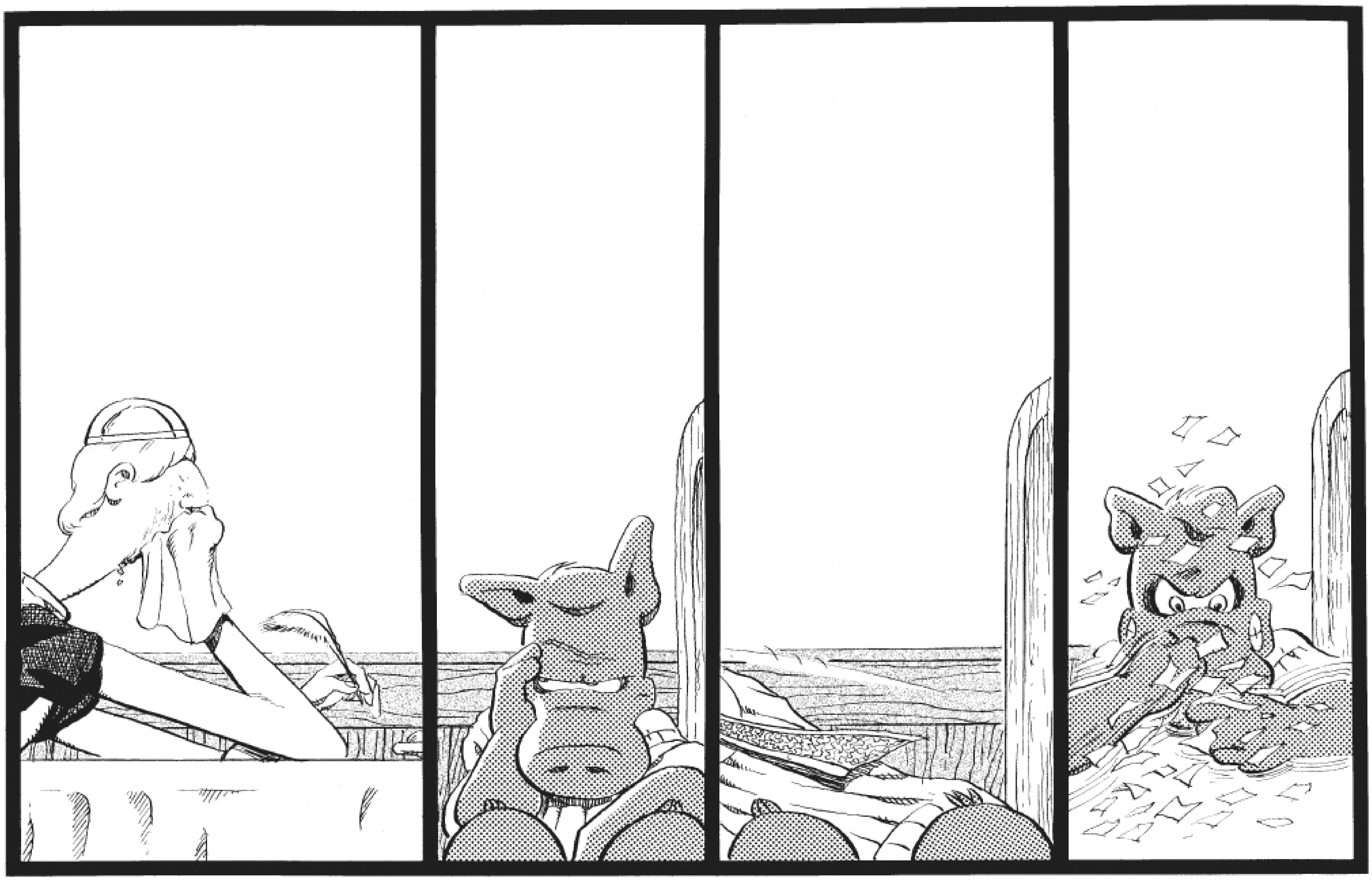
Most Holy: Most Holy doesn't want to talk to you anymore, so go away. If Most Holy wants to talk to you again, Most Holy will send Bear to get you.


Muffins: Yes, Great Cerebus, and what do you wish me to do while I am gone?
Most Holy: Nothing. Just sit in a chair somewhere. You can breathe if you have to.
Muffins: "And his mercy will ~~no~~ know no bounds"
Bear: What's Boobah doing?
Most Holy: Most Holy never knows when he's going to say something perfect, so Most Holy is having Boobah write down all of Most Holy's conversations. It will help when future generations want to know how perfect Most Holy was.
... Besides it seemed like the easiest way to keep Boobah out of
BUMP

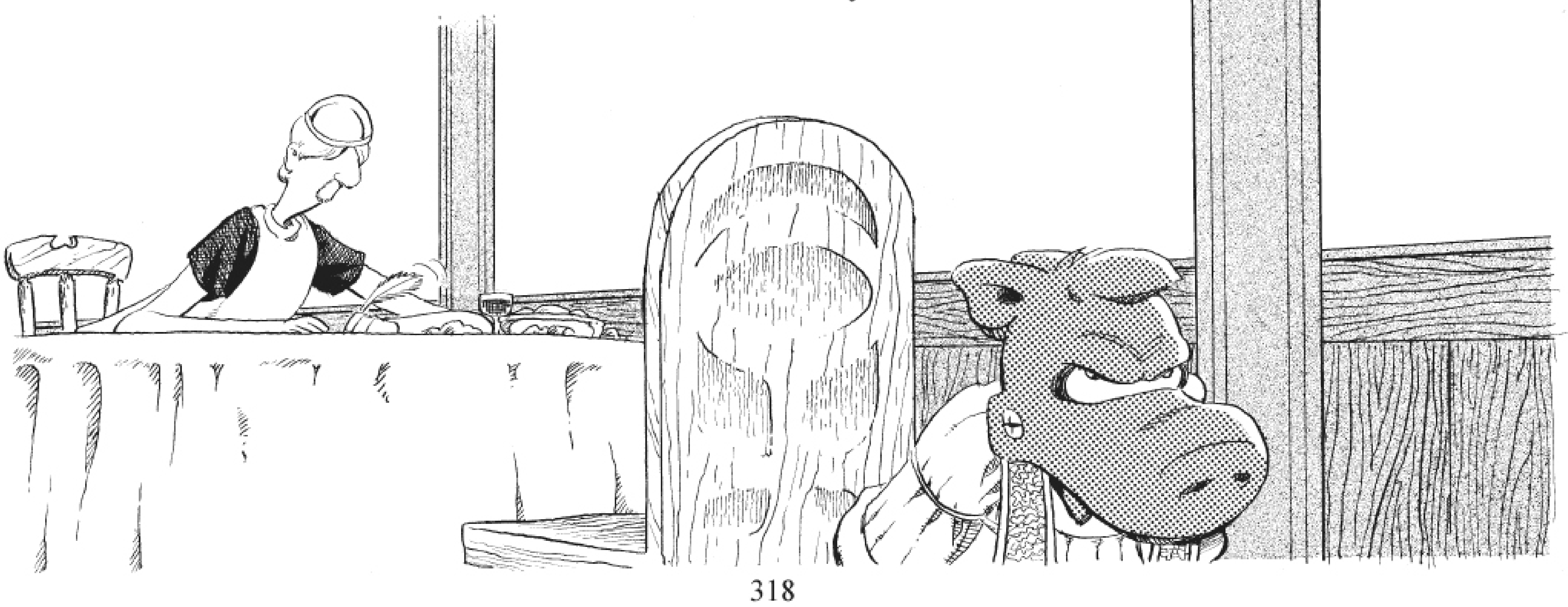

Most Holy: You moron! You numbskull! You dough-head! Get Most Holy something to wipe this off with or Most Holy will have you cut into pieces so small that they'll all fit in your helmet!
Me: I'm sorry! I'm sorry! I'm sorry! I'm sorry! I'm sorry!

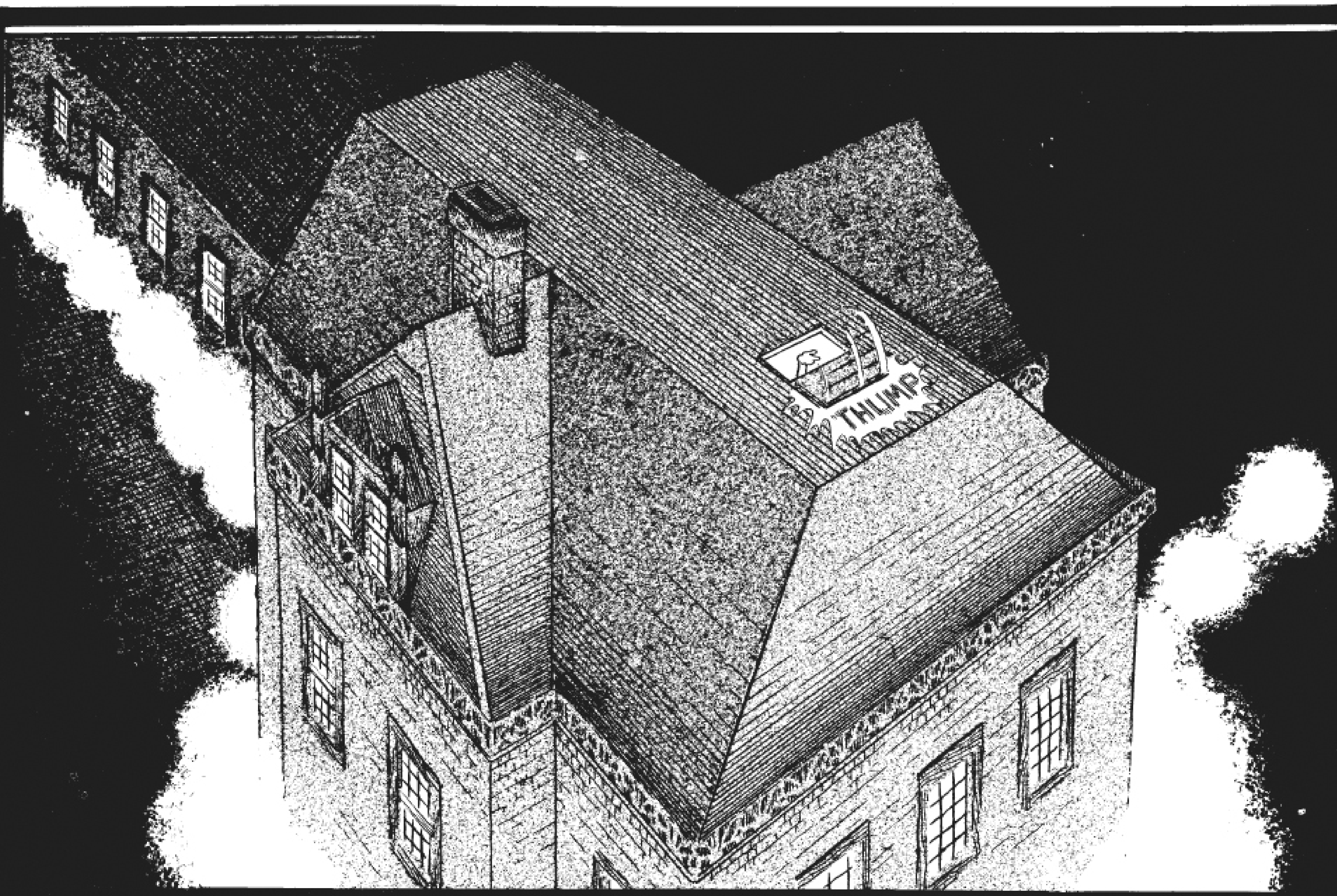

one chance I get to see you during the day and you invite someone to sit and write down everything that we say. I mean, what if I don't want everything we say to be written down?
Most Holy: Look, Cerebus already told you that he never knows when he's going to say something perfect and he needs to have someone around just in case.
Mrs. Most Holy: Well I sure hope he knows how to spell (belching sound) because that's all I've ever heard you say at dinner.


Most Holy: That's disgusting!
Mrs. Most Holy: Disgusting, is it? Well, in that case, maybe I'll just leave you to come up with something ever-so-perfect to say. And you might as well find somewhere else to sleep tonight.
Most Holy: You can't tell the Pope to find somewhere else to sleep!
Mrs. Most Holy: Oh, yeah? Well I just did, shorty.
Me: Can I have her dessert?
Most Holy: Maybe later... when I'm not looking.

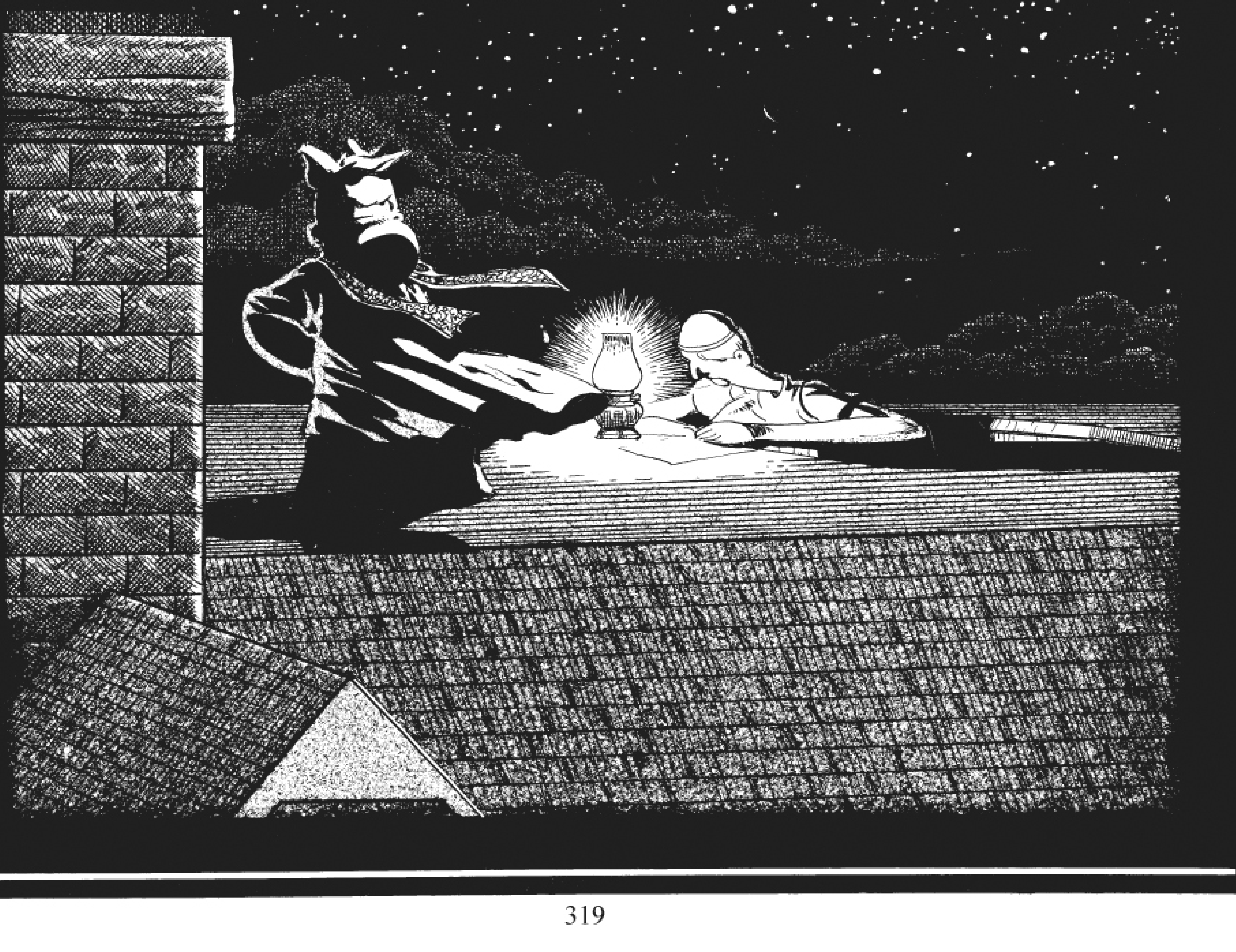


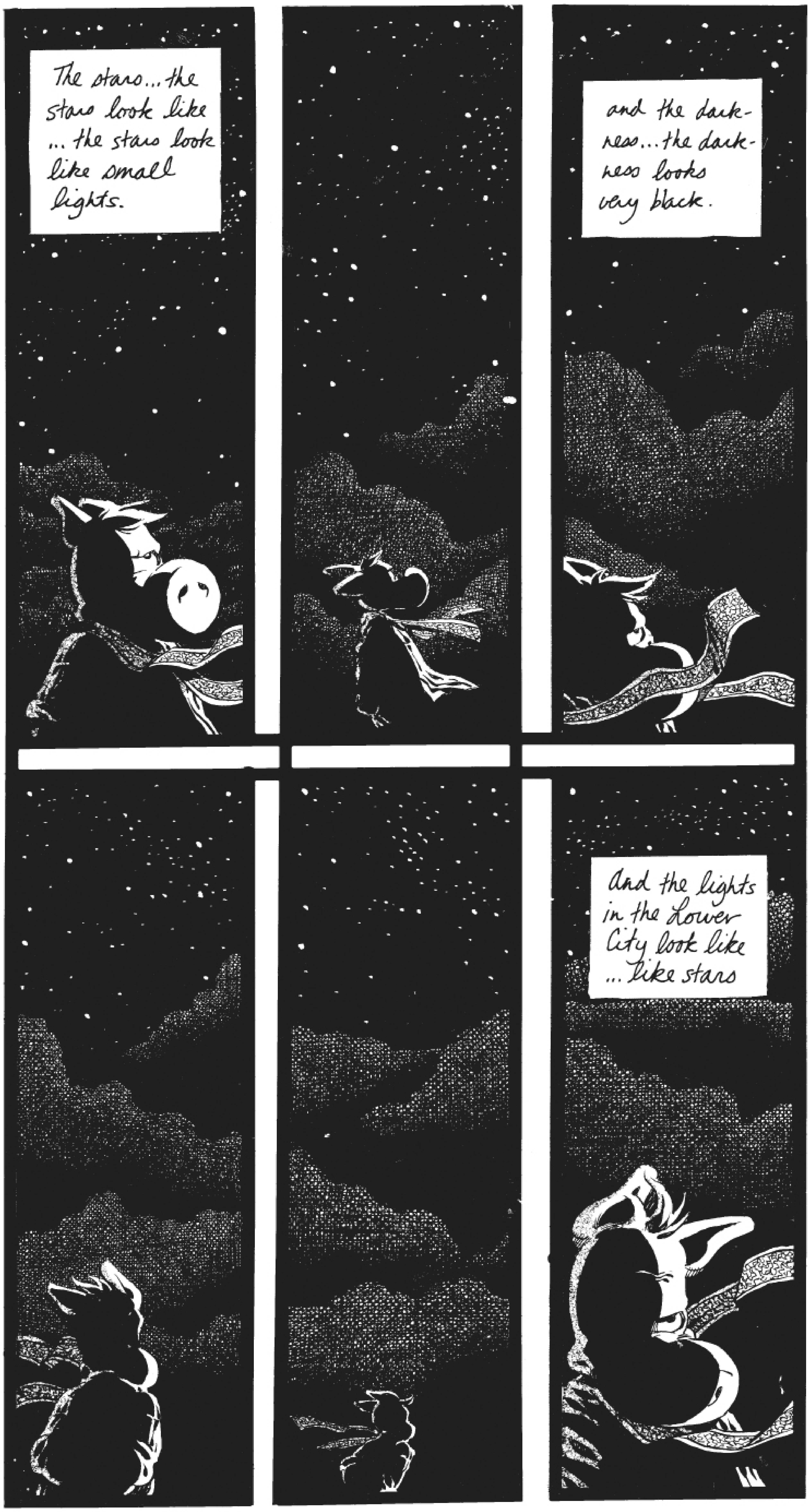
and then Mrs. Most Holy says: "I'm so lucky that a busy Pope like Most Holy always makes sure that he comes upstairs to have dinner with me even though I don't have a gold crown to my name and I haven't the faintest idea of how to help him conquer everything." And then Most Holy says, "Most Holy can't understand why Mrs. Most Holy can't just do as she's told and stop giving Most Holy such a hard time all the damn time." And Mrs. Most Holy says, "Especially when you consider that Most Holy doesn't charge my ugly dried up old prune of a mother a half-bit towards her keep. I mean, she eats like a horse and she snores so loud it keeps Most Holy awake almost every damn night." And then Most Holy says, "If Most Holy wasn't perfect, he probably would have dropped both of you into the Lower City weeks ago." And Mrs Most Holy says, "Most Holy should do it; at least he wouldn't have to listen to the two of us whine all

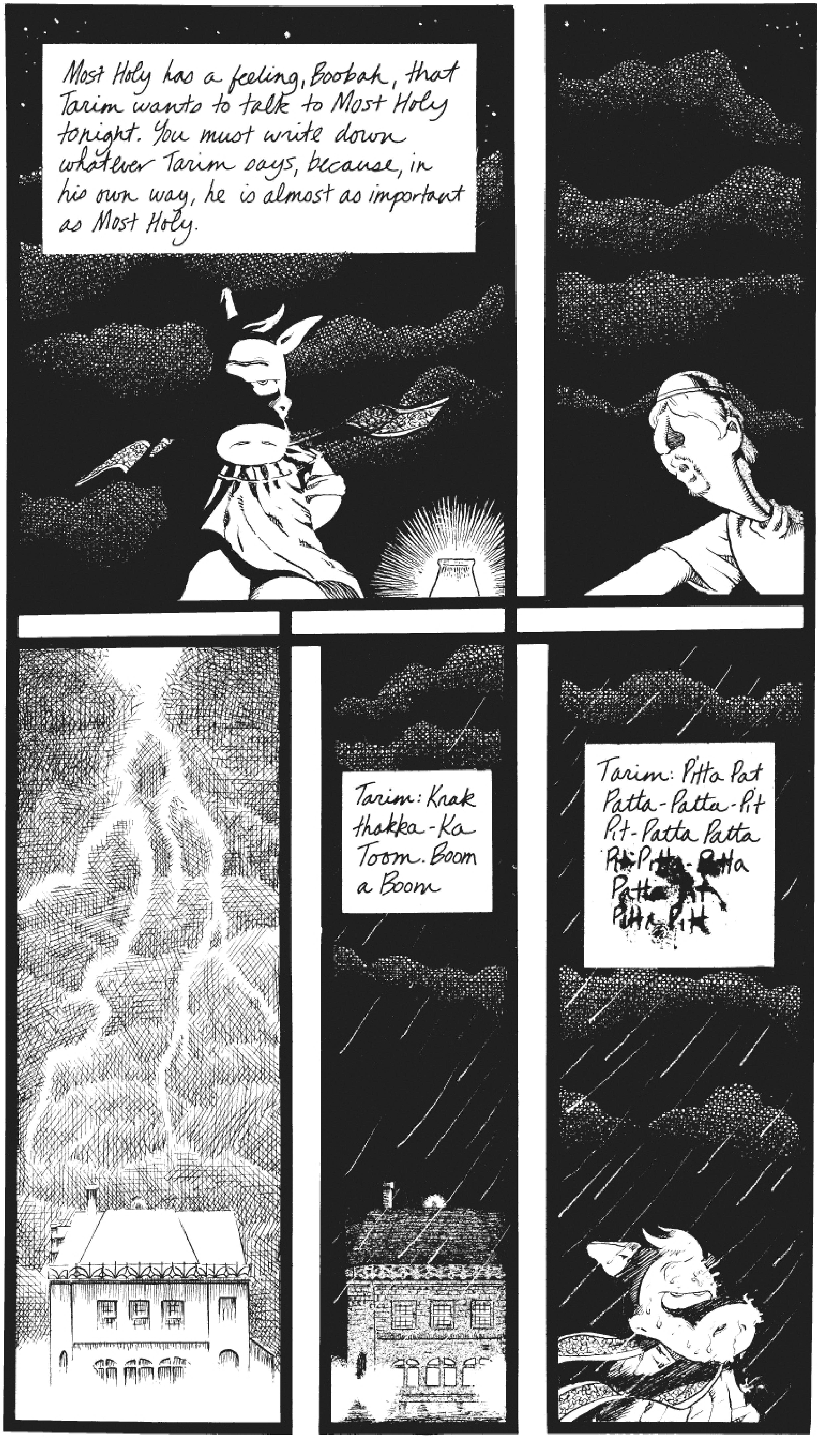


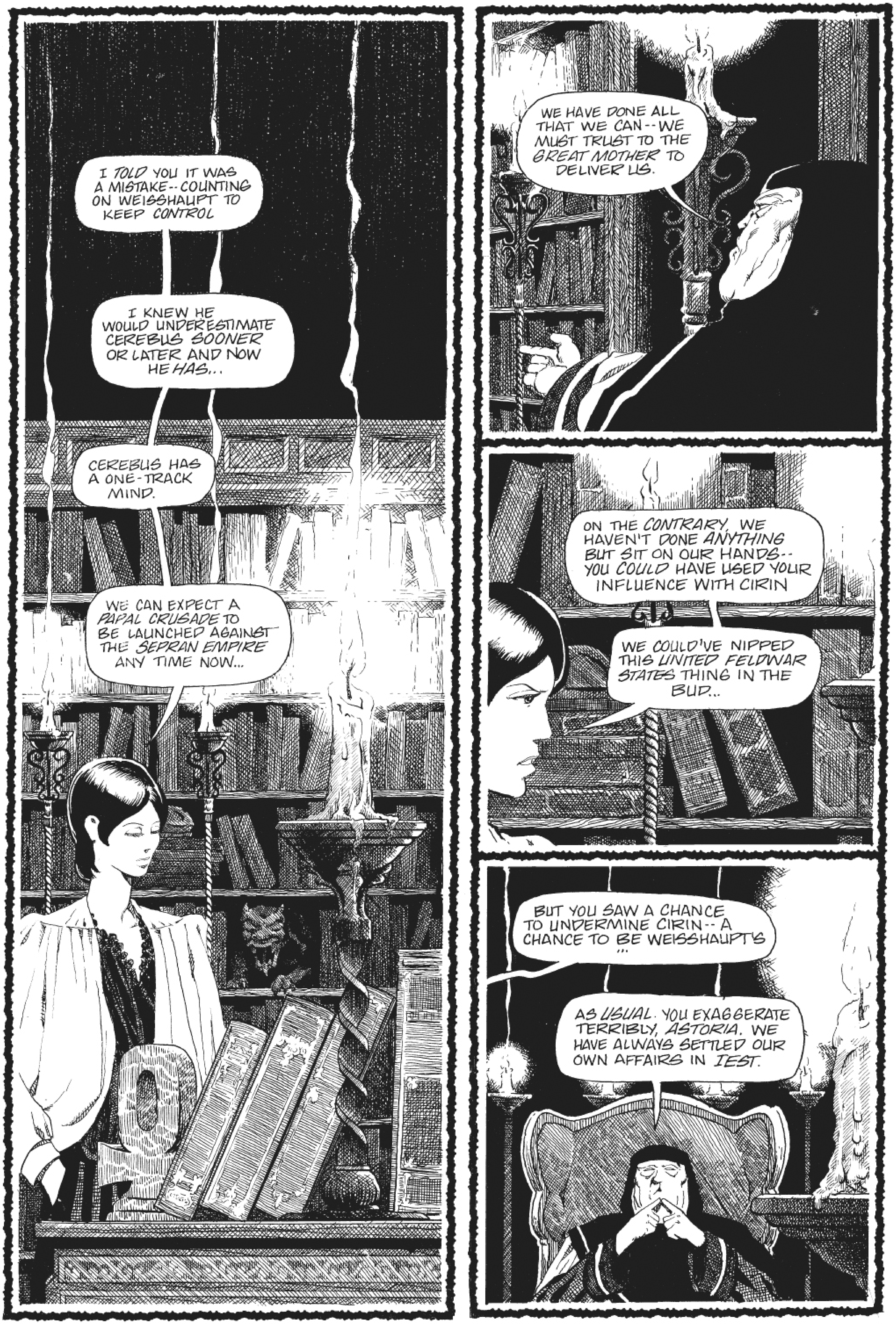


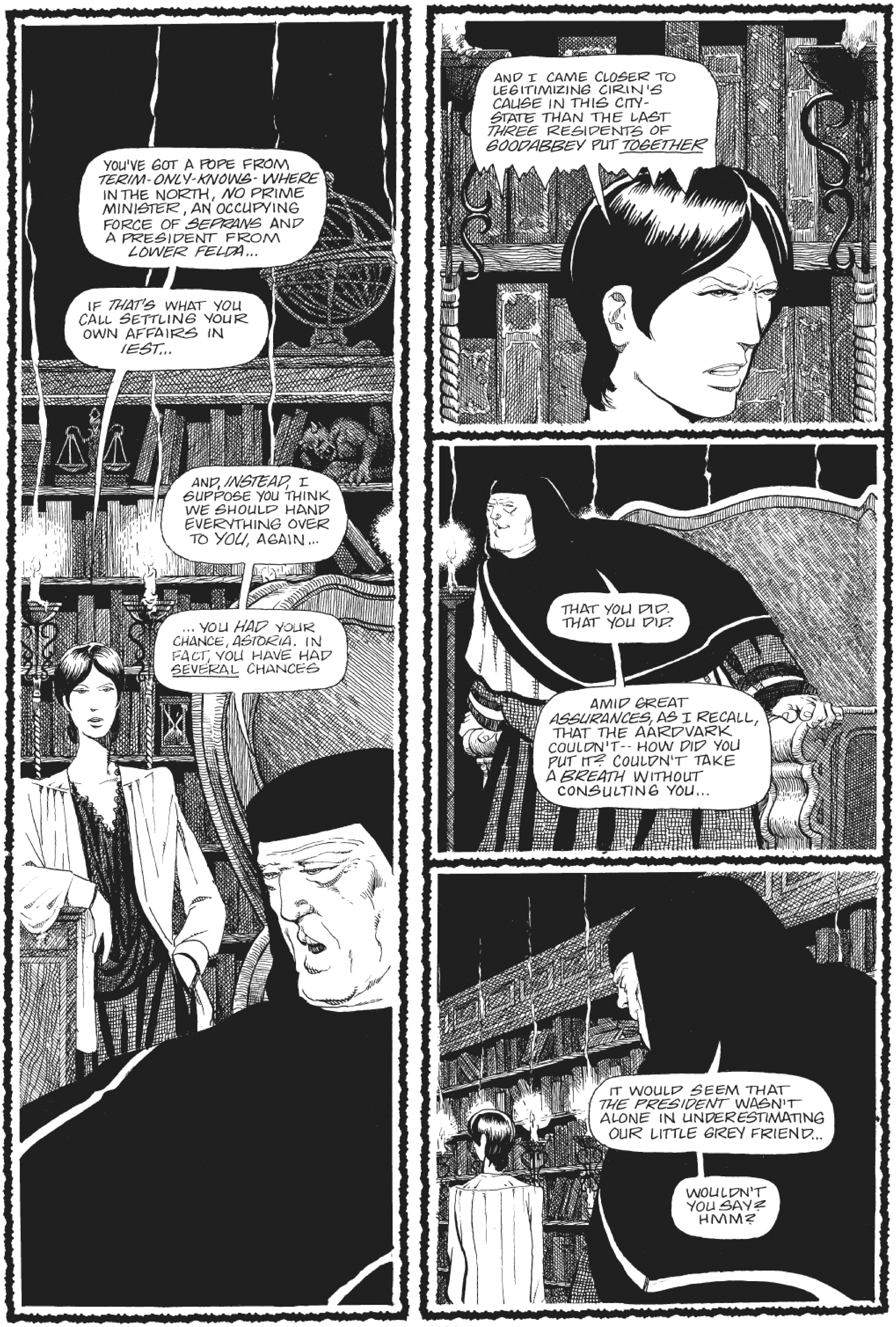
Most Holy: Ah, this is more like it, It took Most Holy a while, but he finally figured out what was wrong. It's hard to say perfect things when you're having conversations with imperfect people. Up here on the roof, Most Holy is much closer to Tarim and Most Holy can just say all of the perfect things that come into Most Holy's head.

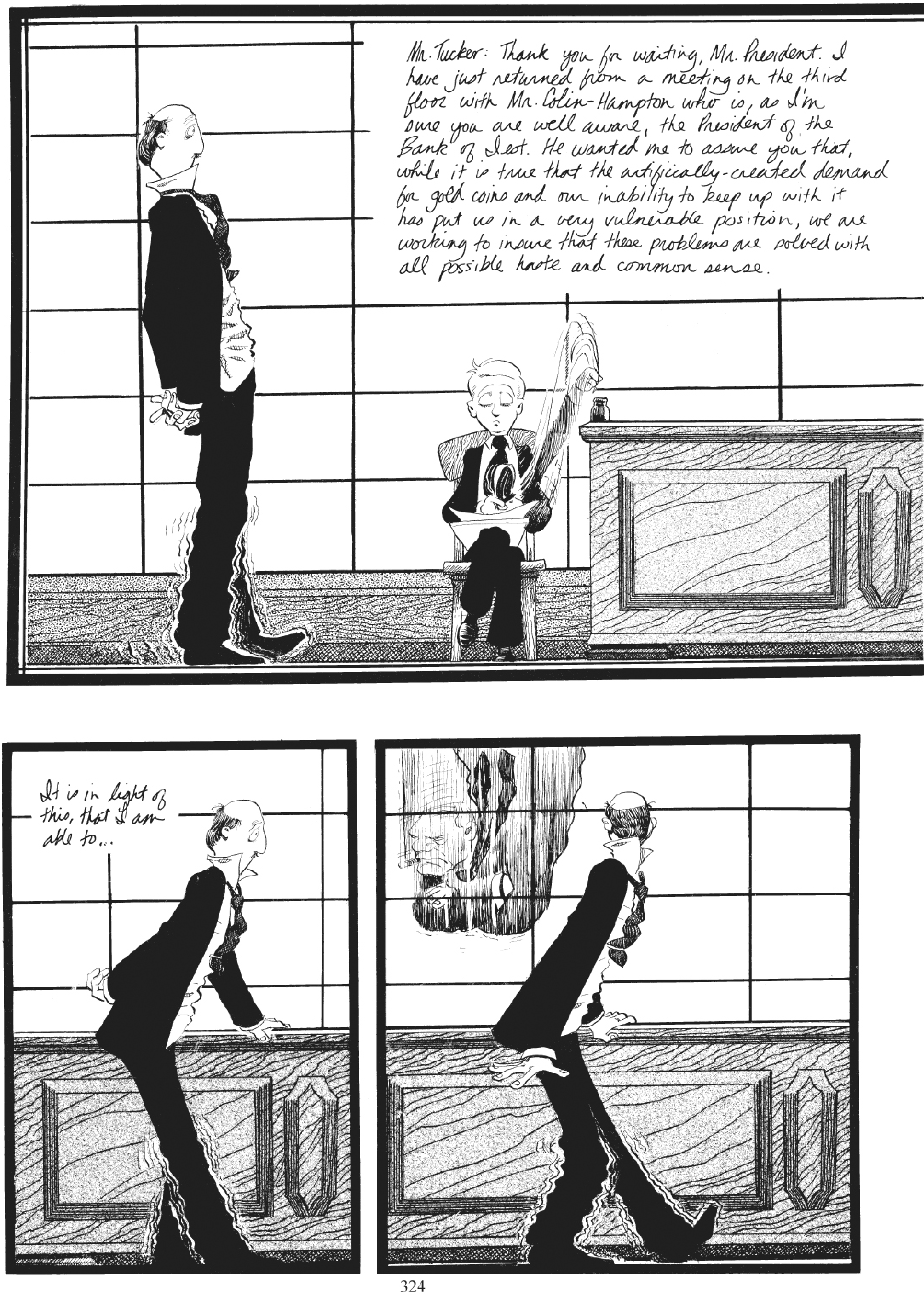


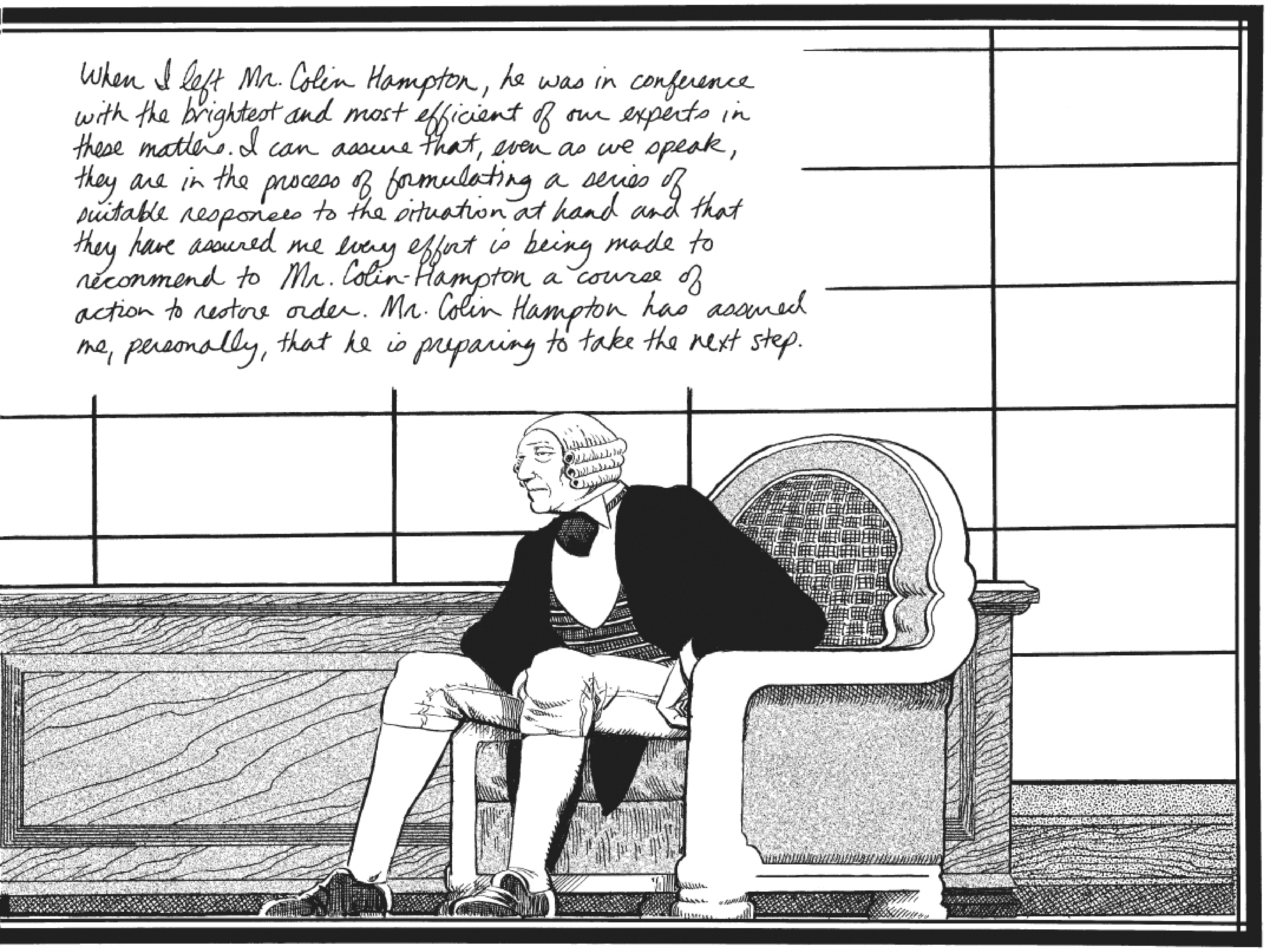

The stars... the stars look like ... the stars look like small lights.
and the darkness... the darkness looks very black.
And the lights in the Lower City look like ... like stars

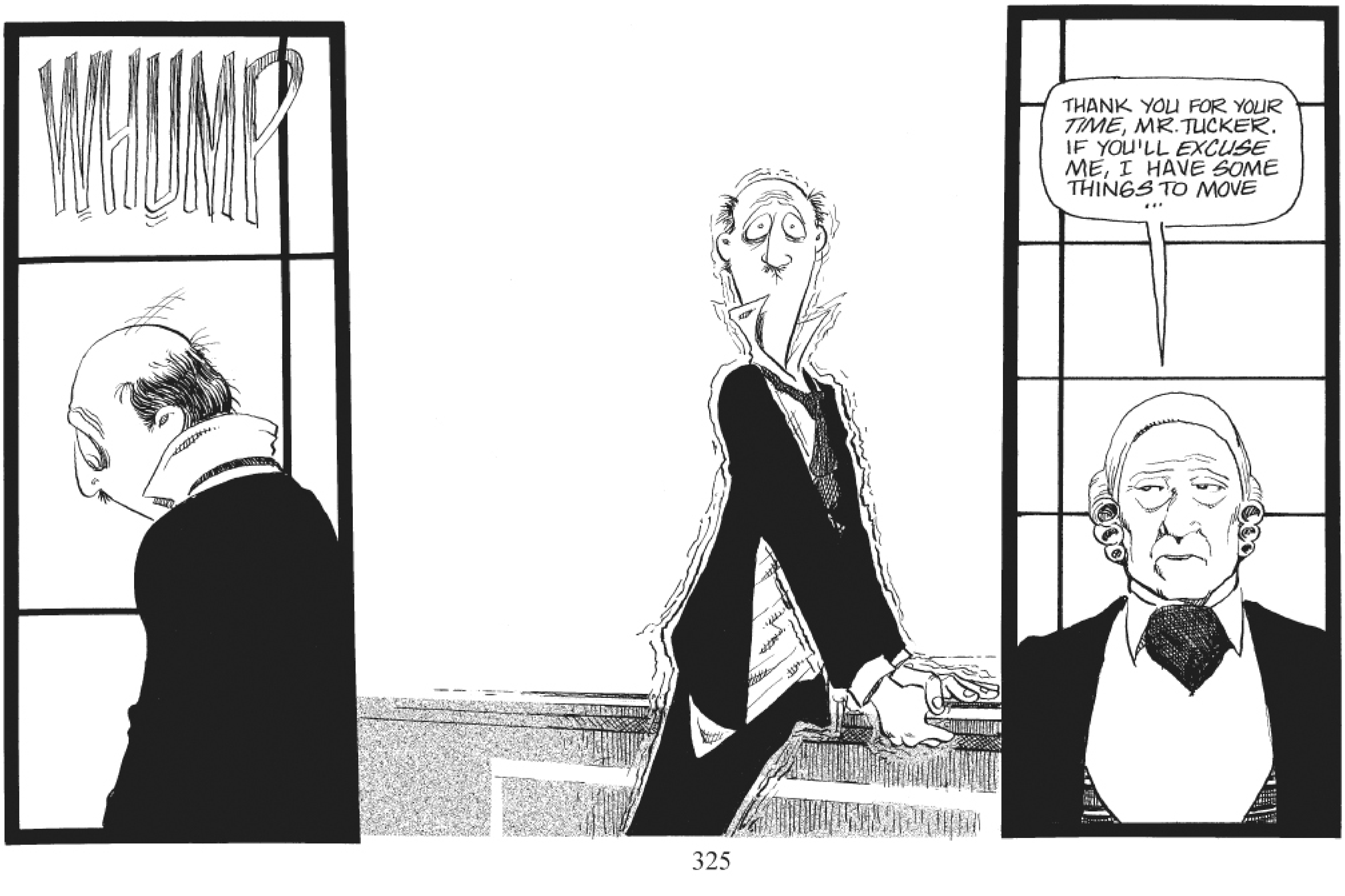

Most Holy has a feeling, Boobah, that Tarim wants to talk to Most Holy tonight. You must write down whatever Tarim says, because, in his own way, he is almost as important as Most Holy.
Tarim: Krak thakka-Ka Toom. Boom a Boom
Tarim: Pitta Pat Patta-Patta-Pit Pit-Patta Patta Pit-Patta-Patta Patta-Pit Pitta-Pit

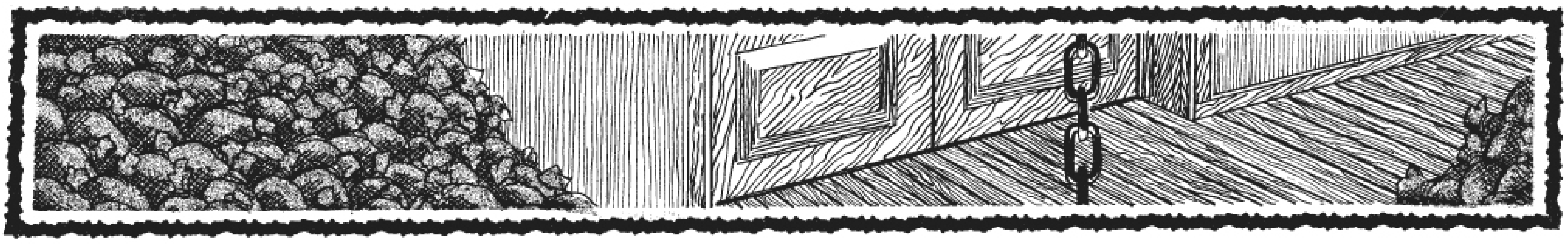

I *TOLD* YOU IT WAS A MISTAKE--COUNTING ON WEISSHAUPT TO KEEP CONTROL
I KNEW HE WOULD UNDERESTIMATE CEREBUS *SOONER* OR LATER AND NOW HE *HAS*...
CEREBUS HAS A ONE-TRACK MIND.
WE CAN EXPECT A *PAPAL CRUSADE* TO BE LAUNCHED AGAINST THE *SEPRAN EMPIRE* ANY TIME NOW...
WE HAVE DONE ALL THAT WE CAN--WE MUST TRUST TO THE *GREAT MOTHER* TO DELIVER US.
ON THE *CONTRARY*, WE HAVEN'T DONE *ANYTHING* BUT SIT ON OUR HANDS--YOU *COULD* HAVE USED YOUR INFLUENCE WITH CIRIN
WE *COULD'VE* NIPPED THIS *UNITED FELDWAR STATES* THING IN THE BUD...
BUT YOU SAW A CHANCE TO UNDERMINE CIRIN--A CHANCE TO BE WEISSHAUPT'S ...
AS *USUAL*. YOU EXAGGERATE TERRIBLY, *ASTORIA*. WE HAVE ALWAYS SETTLED OUR OWN AFFAIRS IN *IEST*.


YOU'VE GOT A POPE FROM *TERIM-ONLY-KNOWS-WHERE* IN THE NORTH, *NO PRIME MINISTER*, AN OCCUPYING FORCE OF *SEPRANS* AND A PRESIDENT FROM *LOWER FELDA*...
IF *THAT'S* WHAT YOU CALL SETTLING YOUR OWN AFFAIRS IN *IEST*...
AND, *INSTEAD*, I SUPPOSE YOU THINK WE SHOULD HAND EVERYTHING OVER TO *YOU*, AGAIN...
...YOU *HAD* YOUR CHANCE, *ASTORIA*. IN FACT, YOU HAVE HAD SEVERAL CHANCES
AND I CAME CLOSER TO LEGITIMIZING CIRIN'S CAUSE IN THIS CITY-STATE THAN THE LAST *THREE* RESIDENTS OF *GOODABBEY* PUT *TOGETHER*
THAT YOU DID. THAT YOU DID.
AMID GREAT *ASSURANCES*, AS I RECALL, THAT THE AARDVARK COULDN'T-- HOW DID YOU PUT IT? COULDN'T TAKE A *BREATH* WITHOUT CONSULTING YOU...
IT WOULD SEEM THAT *THE PRESIDENT* WASN'T ALONE IN UNDERESTIMATING OUR LITTLE GREY FRIEND...
WOULDN'T YOU SAY? HMM?


Mr. Tucker: Thank you for waiting, Mr. President. I have just returned from a meeting on the third floor with Mr. Colin-Hampton who is, as I'm sure you are well aware, the President of the Bank of Iest. He wanted me to assure you that, while it is true that the artificially-created demand for gold coins and our inability to keep up with it has put us in a very vulnerable position, we are working to insure that these problems are solved with all possible haste and common sense.
It is in light of this, that I am able to...


When I left Mr. Colin Hampton, he was in conference with the brightest and most efficient of our experts in these matters. I can assure that, even as we speak, they are in the process of formulating a series of suitable responses to the situation at hand and that they have assured me every effort is being made to recommend to Mr. Colin-Hampton a course of action to restore order. Mr. Colin Hampton has assured me, personally, that he is preparing to take the next step.

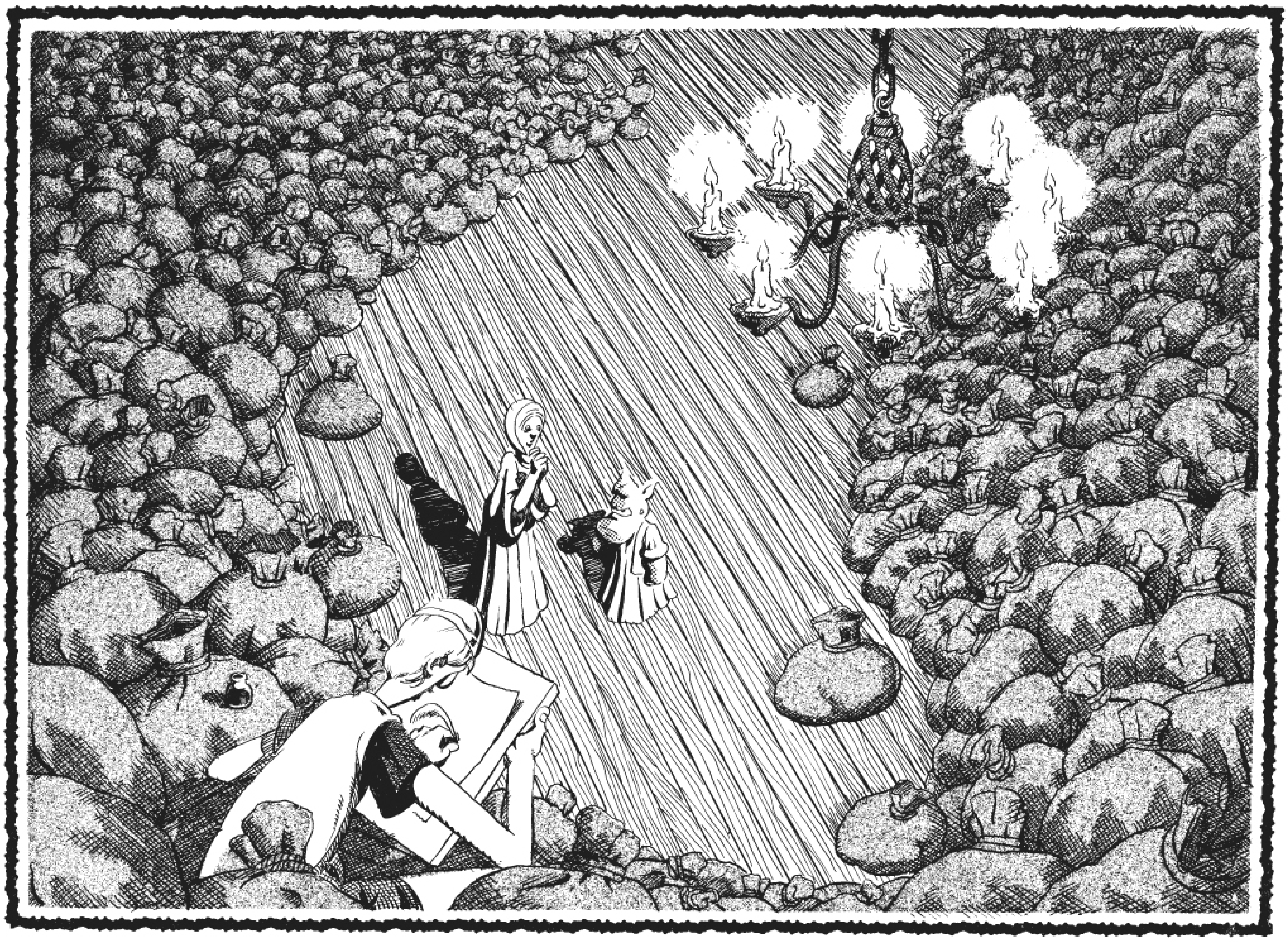

WHUMP
THANK YOU FOR YOUR *TIME*, MR. TUCKER. IF YOU'LL *EXCUSE* ME, I HAVE *SOME* THINGS TO MOVE ...



Most Holy: The day is almost over and we've only taken in six thousand gold coins! Most Holy is disgusted and Tarim will be, too when Most Holy tells him.

Posey: Perhaps, hum hum, you could tell him how generous everyone has been up until now. Perhaps

Most Holy: Perhaps nothing! Most Holy isn't going to lie to Tarim just to get a bunch of peasants off the hook. There are more gold coins out there than this. Most Holy can almost smell all the gold people are hiding



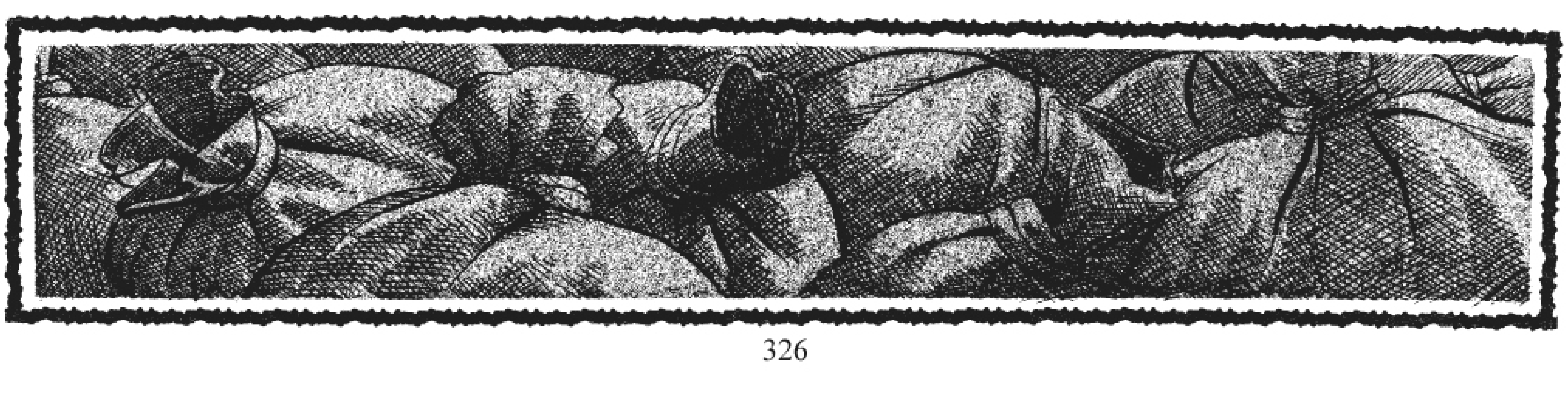
Posey: But, hum hum, they have to eat.

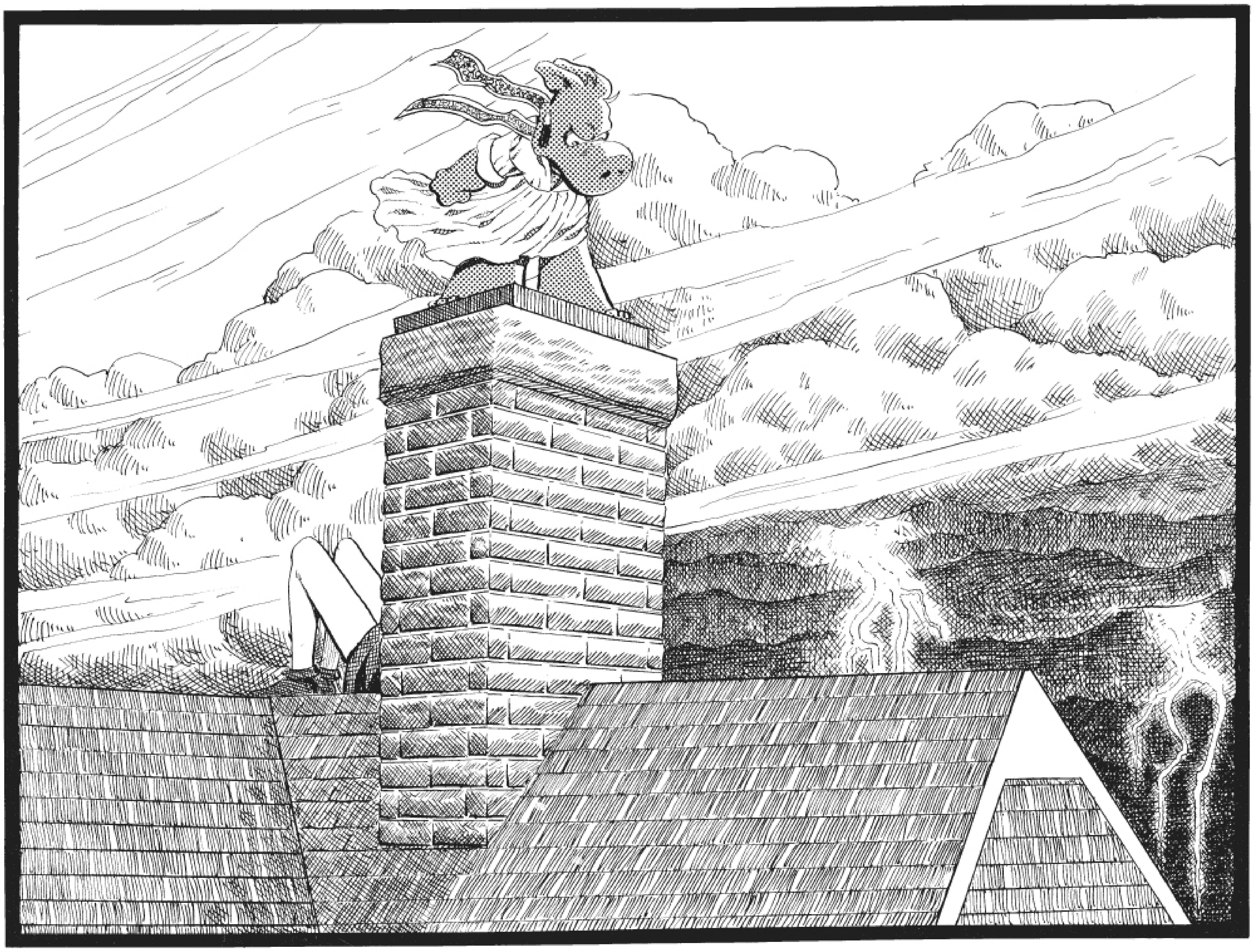
Most Holy: Sure, eat so they can stay alive long enough to have to eat again. They must think that food grows on trees.

Posey: Uh...

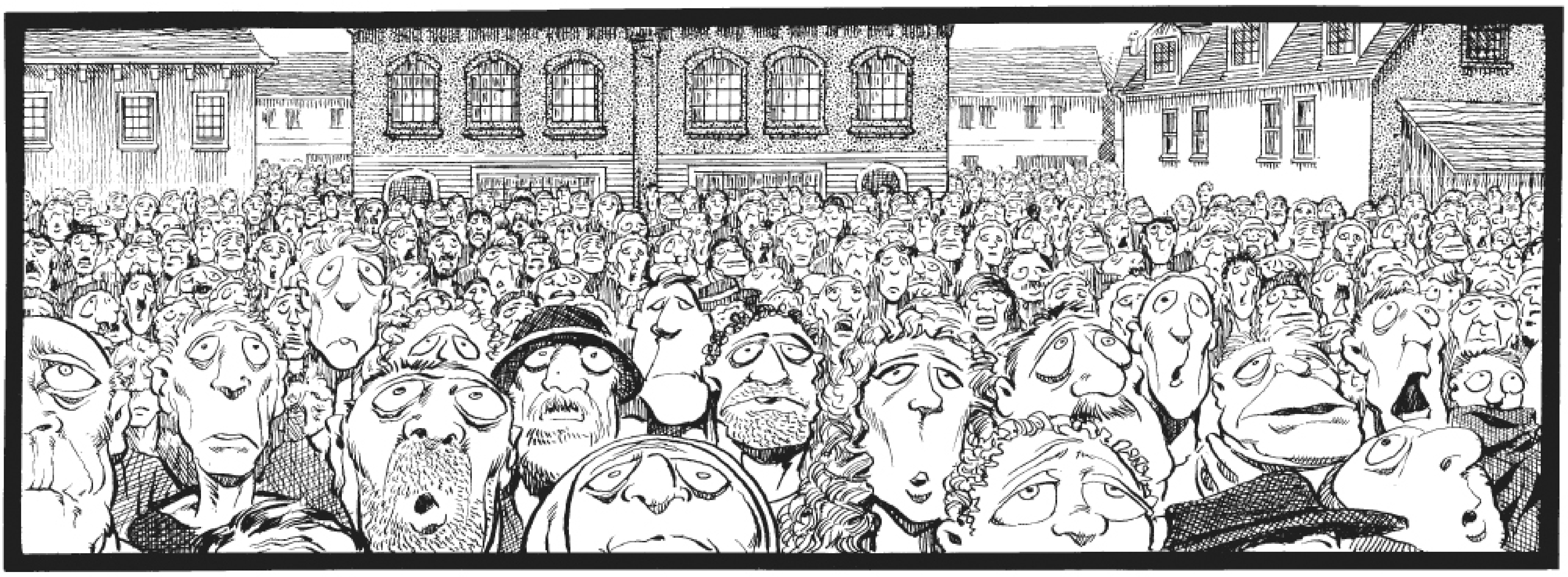
Most Holy: No, Most Holy will just have to prove to them that Most Holy is serious about destroying the world unless Most Holy gets enough gold coins.

Posey: Uh...





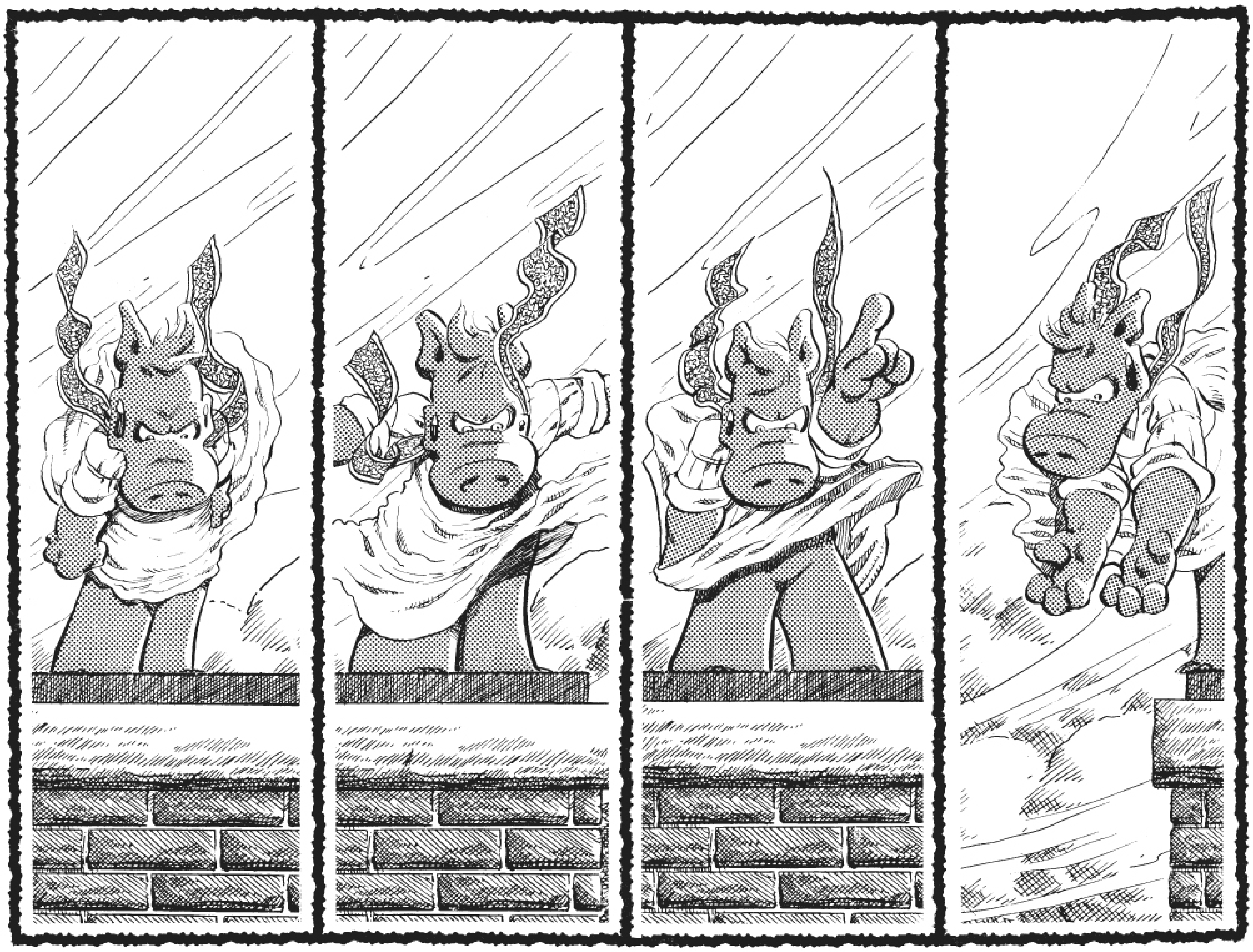
Most Holy: You think Most Holy stands up here shouting just to hear himself shout? Do you? Well, you're wrong. Most Holy is trying to get it through your thick skulls that Tarim isn't kidding. Unless you find Tarim a lot more gold coins, everything is going to be reduced to little piles of ashes. Is that what you want? Is it?



Most Holy: Most Holy knows what you're going to say. You're going to say, "But, Most Holy, we are poor and starving and wretched and we are better off dead."

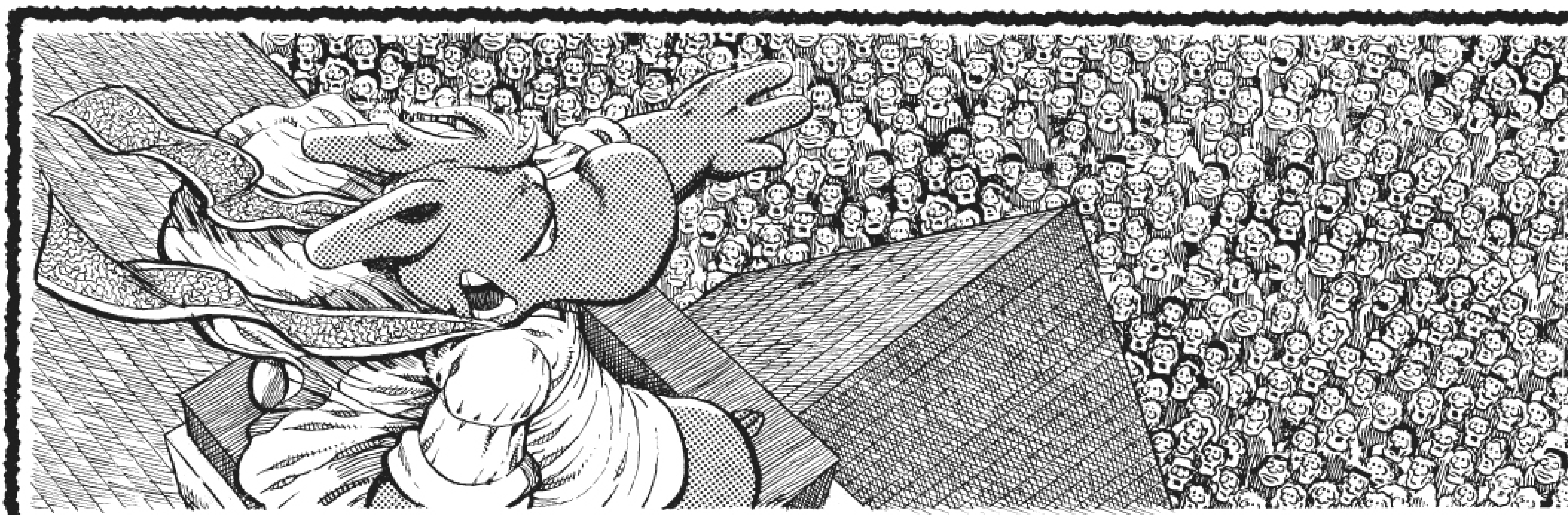
This is true.

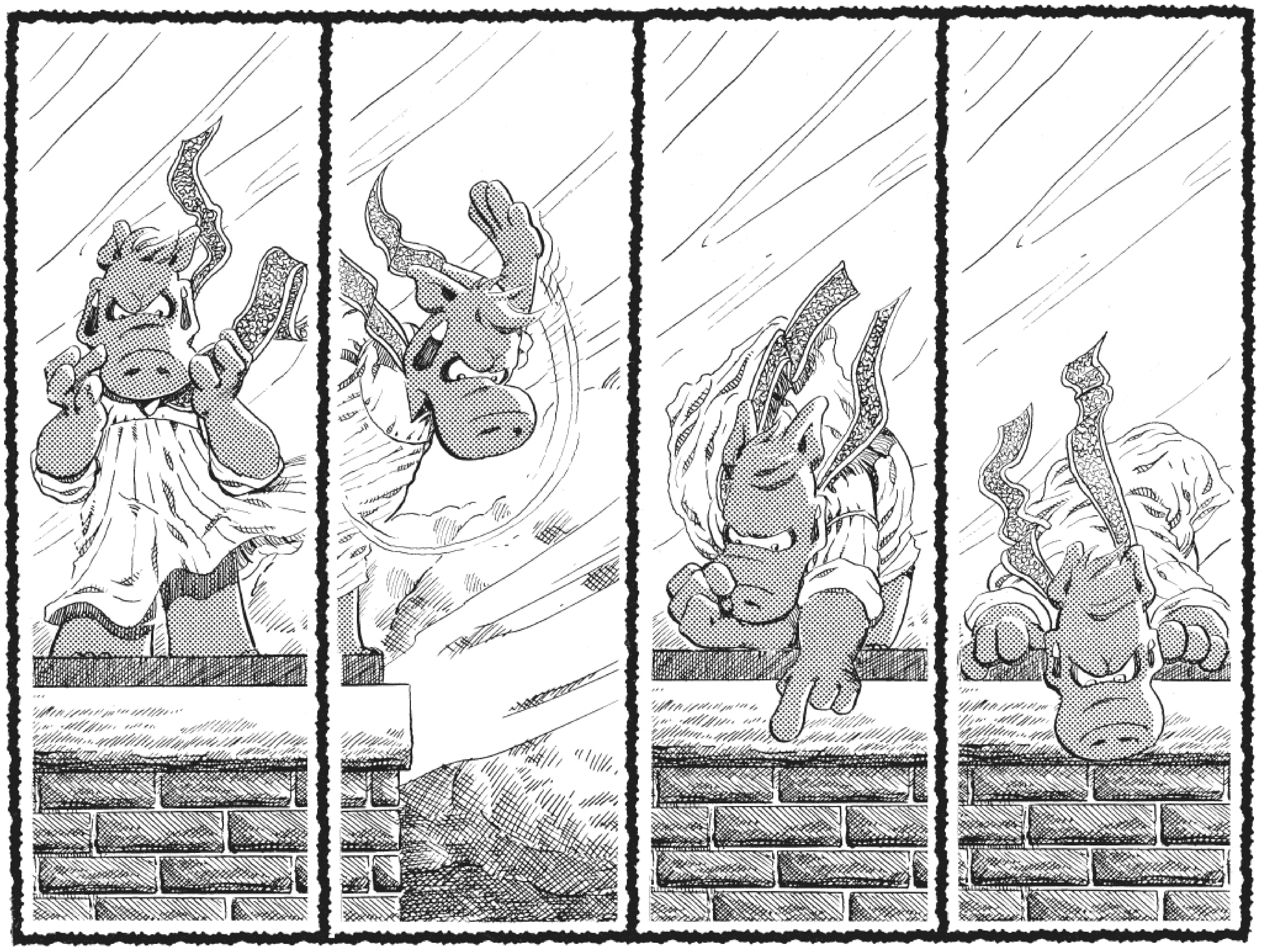
But what Most Holy didn't tell you is that Tarim isn't destroying the world to be a nice guy. Tarim is going to destroy the world because all of you are so worthless that he wants to show you what real suffering is.



Most Holy: You think you're suffering now? Do you? Well suppose Most Holy were to tell you that when Tarim destroys the world by fire, the first thing to burn is everyone's nostril hair. That's right! Nostril hair!

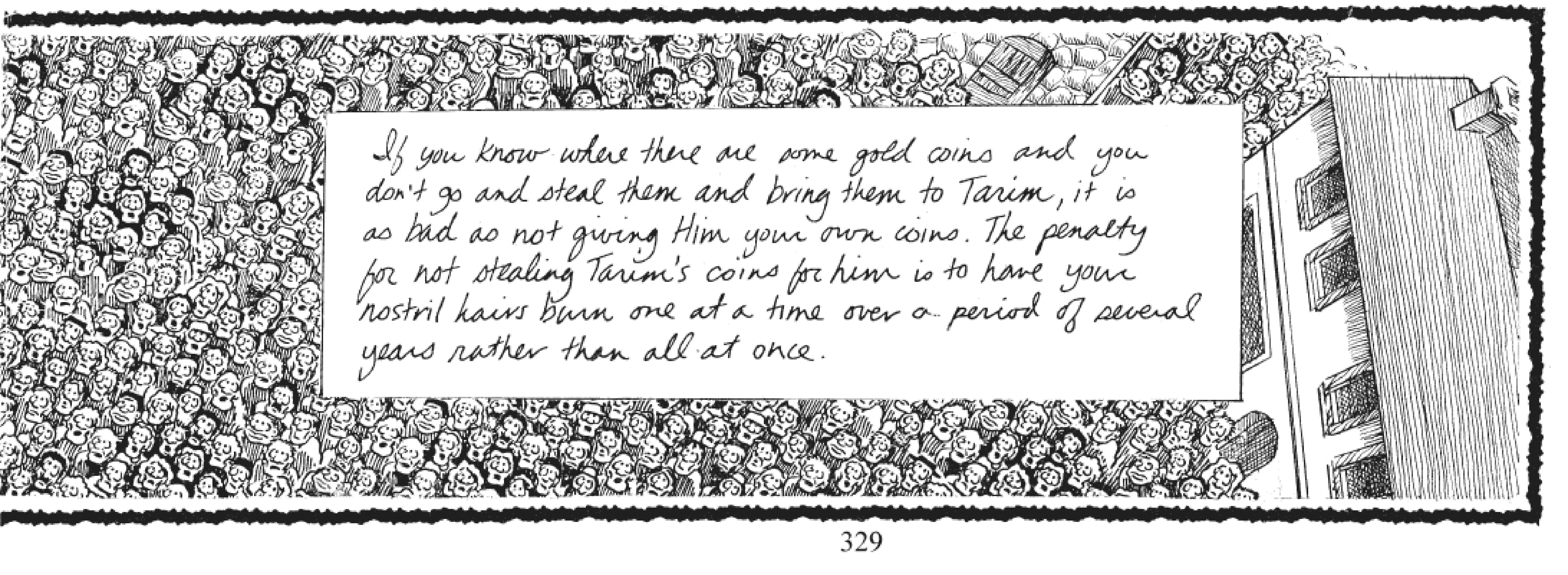
So when your sinuses start filling up with thick black smoke that smells like burning hair, and the smoke starts billowing out of your tear ducts you'll realize that you had things pretty easy up until then



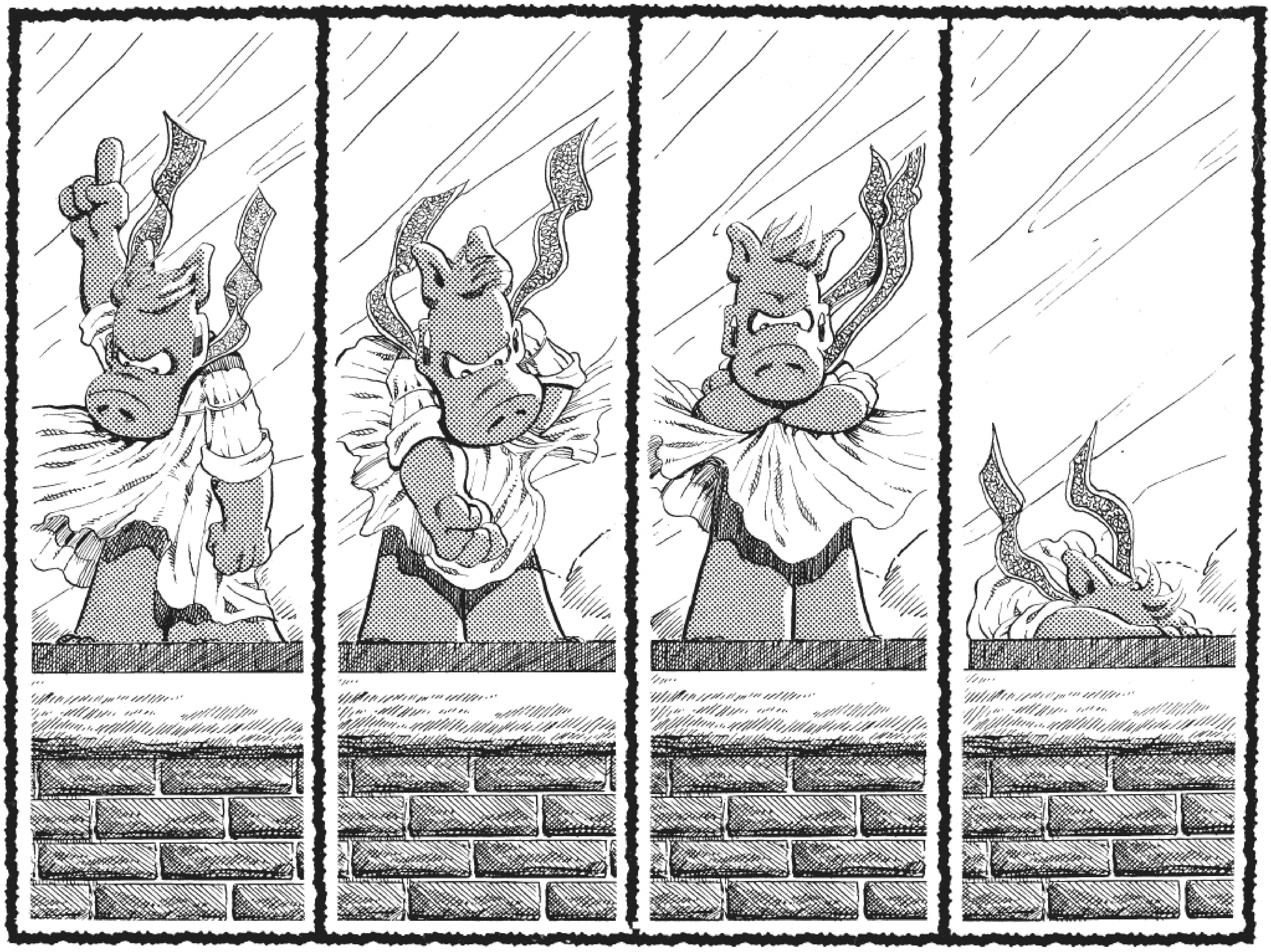


But then it will be too late. You'll come to Most Holy with your noses melted and your foreheads black, begging him to take your gold coins. And even before Most Holy can tell you, "It's too late; the whole thing is out of Most Holy's hands," Fwoosh, it will be your tongue's turn.

In the blinking of an eye, your molars will be hot enough to fry an egg. Before you can say "I wish hadn't been so stupid," you'll be able to use your tonsils as a night-light. From there it will spread to your stomach In minutes you'll be a walking liver and kidney stew.



If you know where there are some gold coins and you don't go and steal them and bring them to Tarim, it is as bad as not giving Him your own coins. The penalty for not stealing Tarim's coins for him is to have your nostril hairs burn one at a time over a period of several years rather than all at once.

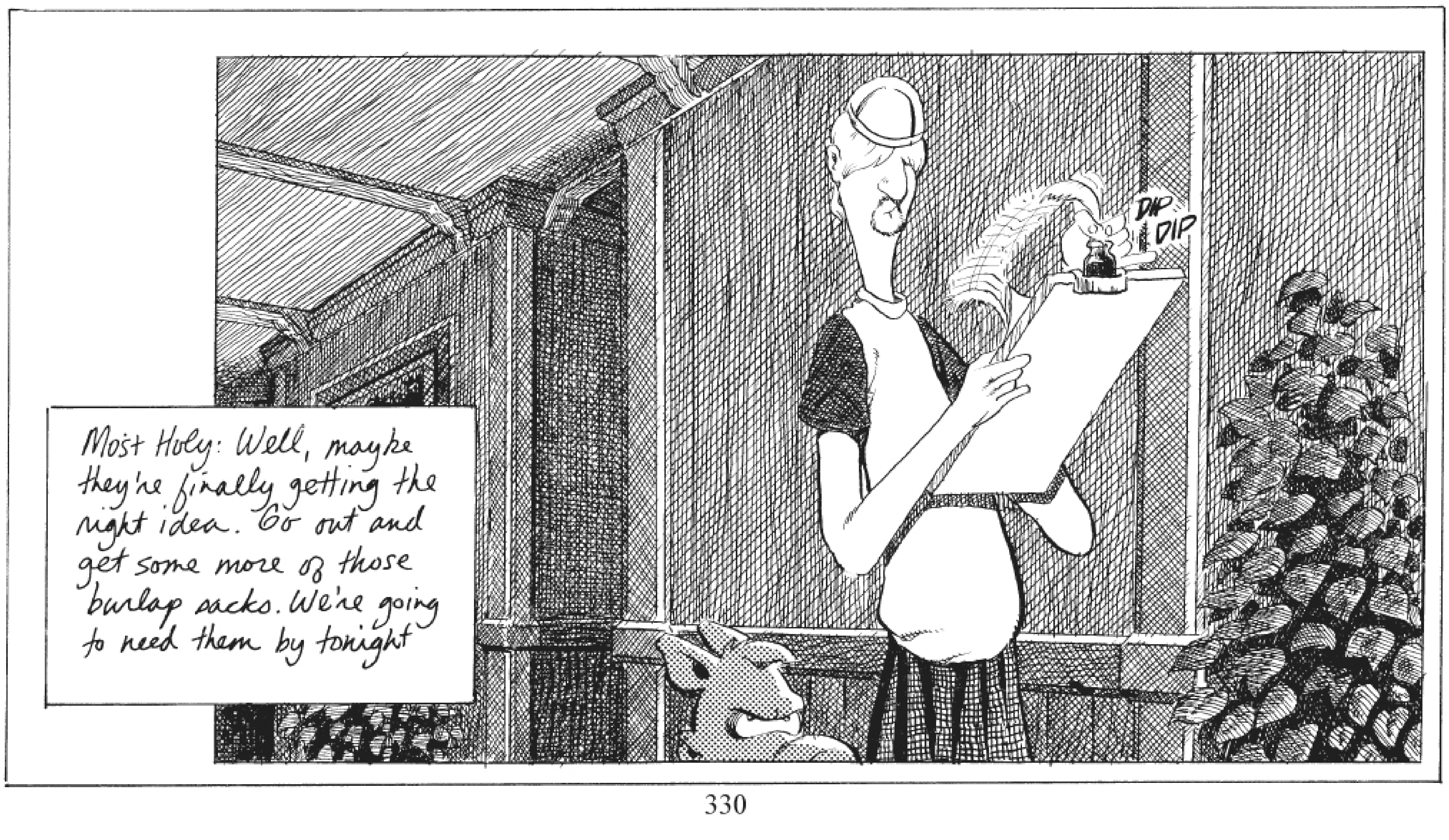


Most Holy: You still have ten days to locate all of Most Holy's gold and bring it to him. Remember! The first people to ignite will be your children and any other relative that you like a lot.

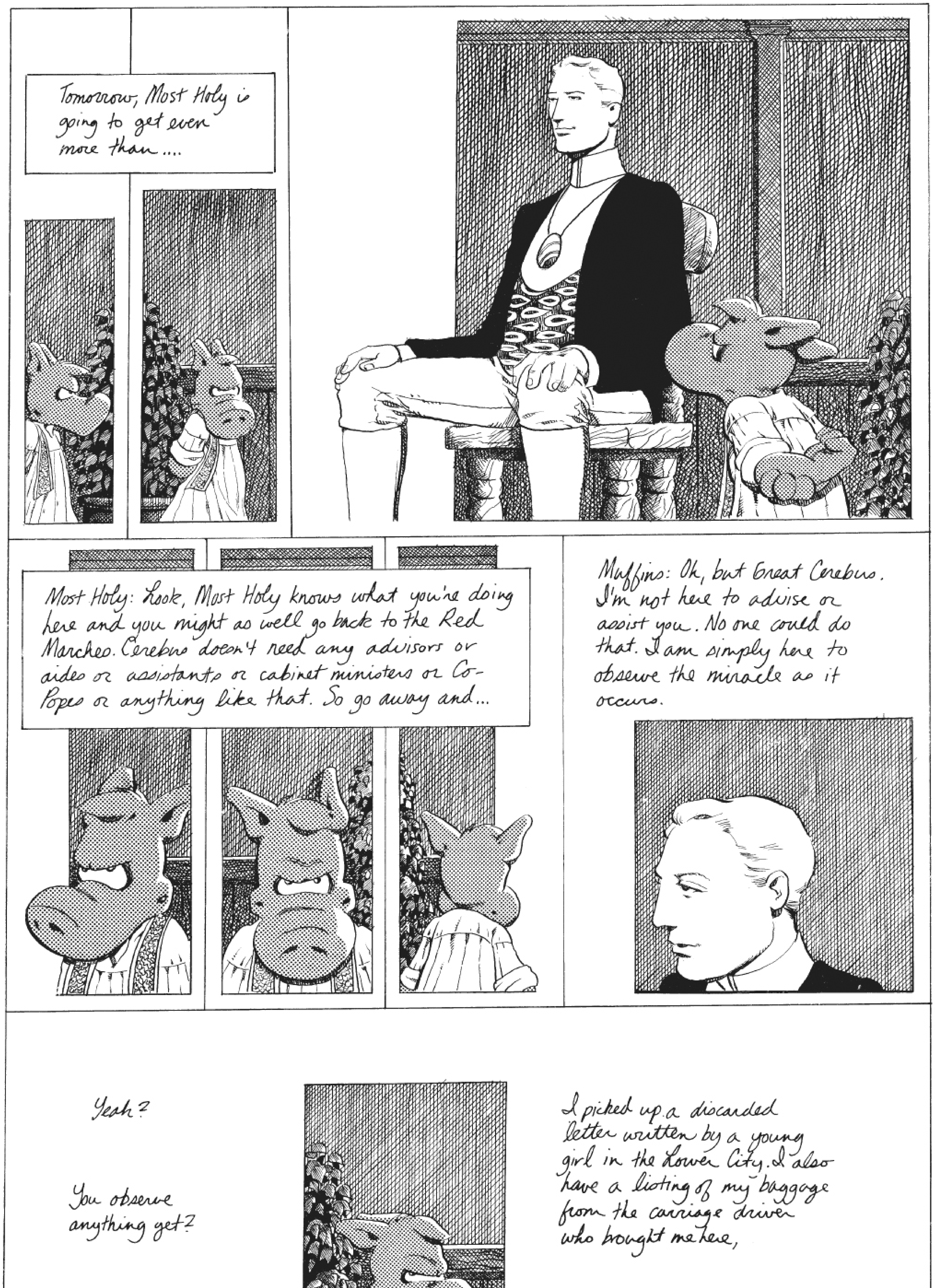
Ten days. Most Holy has spoken.

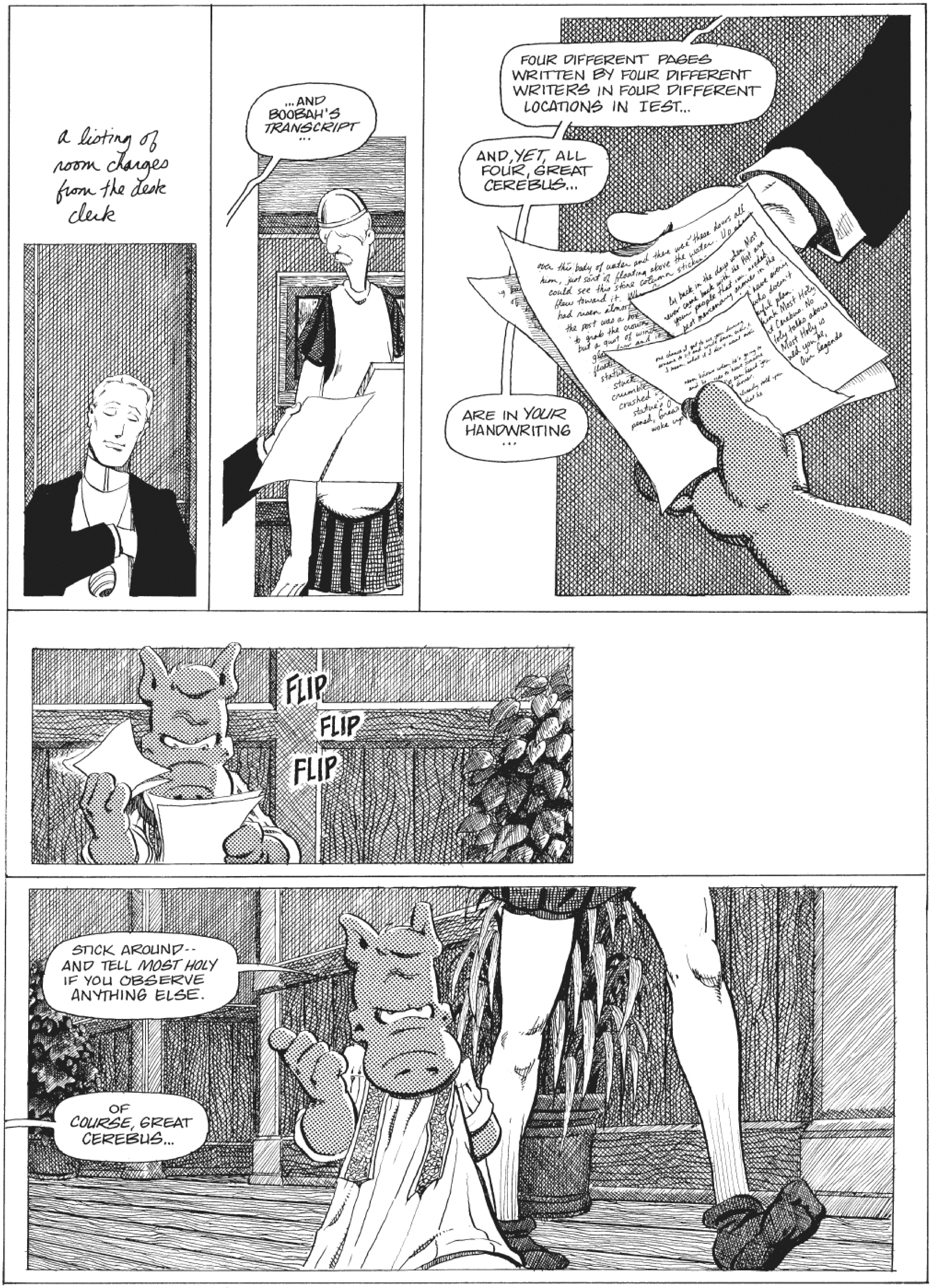
Most Holy: Did you get all that, Boobah?

Me: Yup.

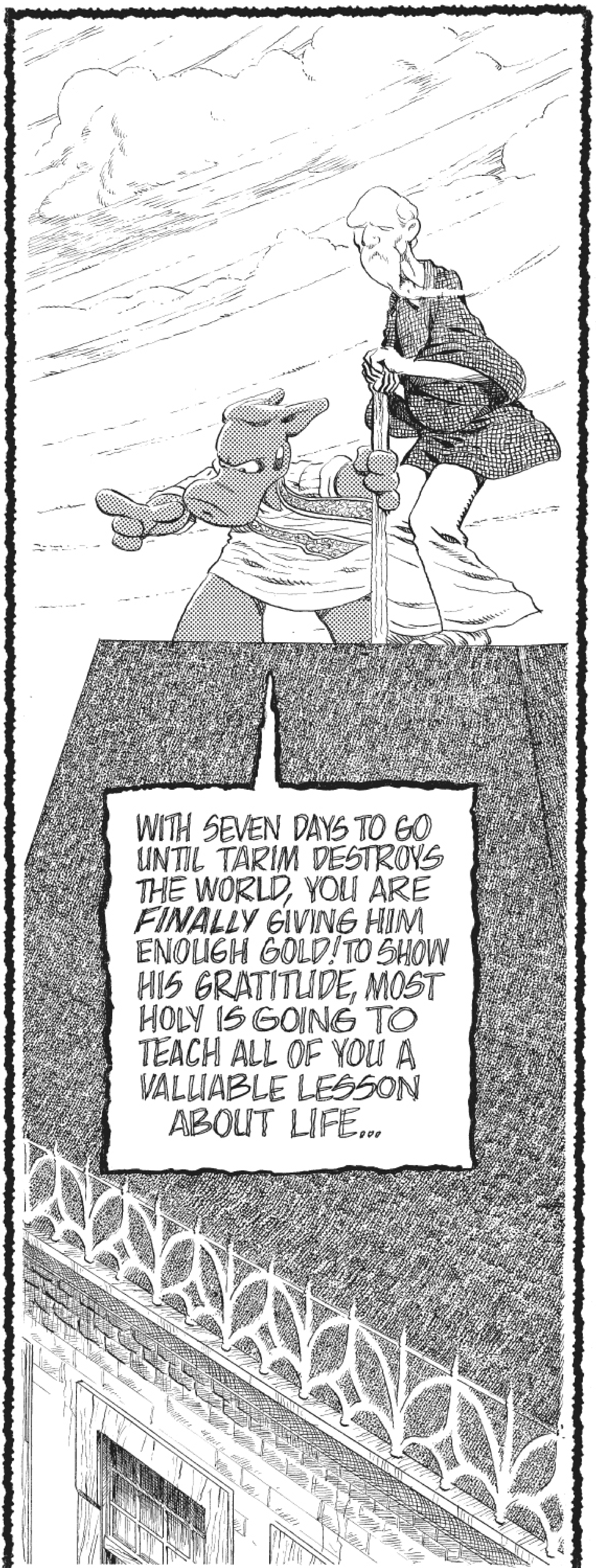


Most Holy: Well, maybe they're finally getting the right idea. Go out and get some more of those burlap sacks. We're going to need them by tonight

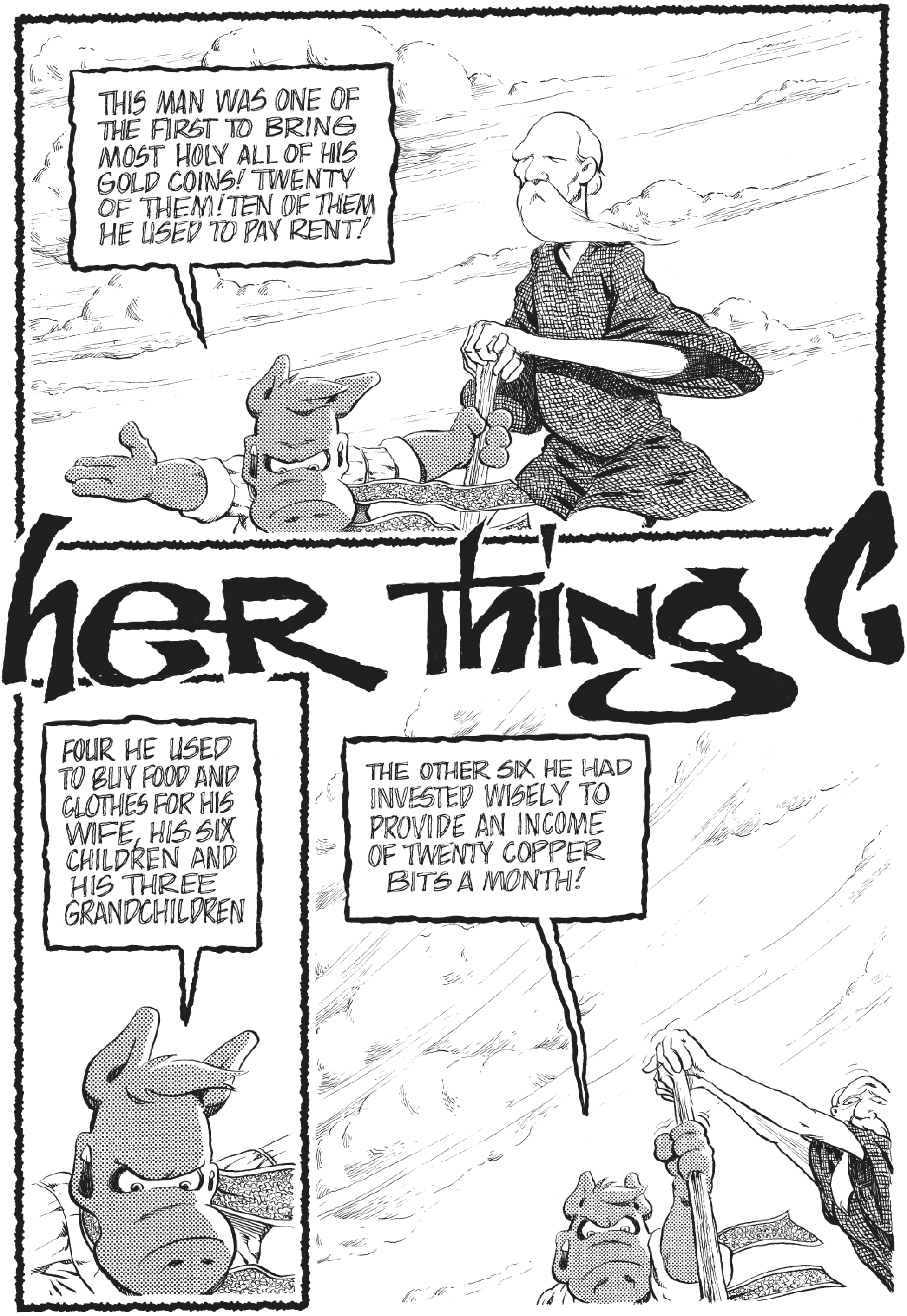

Tomorrow, Most Holy is going to get even more than....
Most Holy: Look, Most Holy knows what you're doing here and you might as well go back to the Red Marches. Cerebus doesn't need any advisors or aides or assistants or cabinet ministers or Co-Popes or anything like that. So go away and...
Muffins: Oh, but Great Cerebus. I'm not here to advise or assist you. No one could do that. I am simply here to observe the miracle as it occurs.
Yeah?
You observe anything yet?
I picked up a discarded letter written by a young girl in the Lower City. I also have a listing of my baggage from the carriage driver who brought me here,

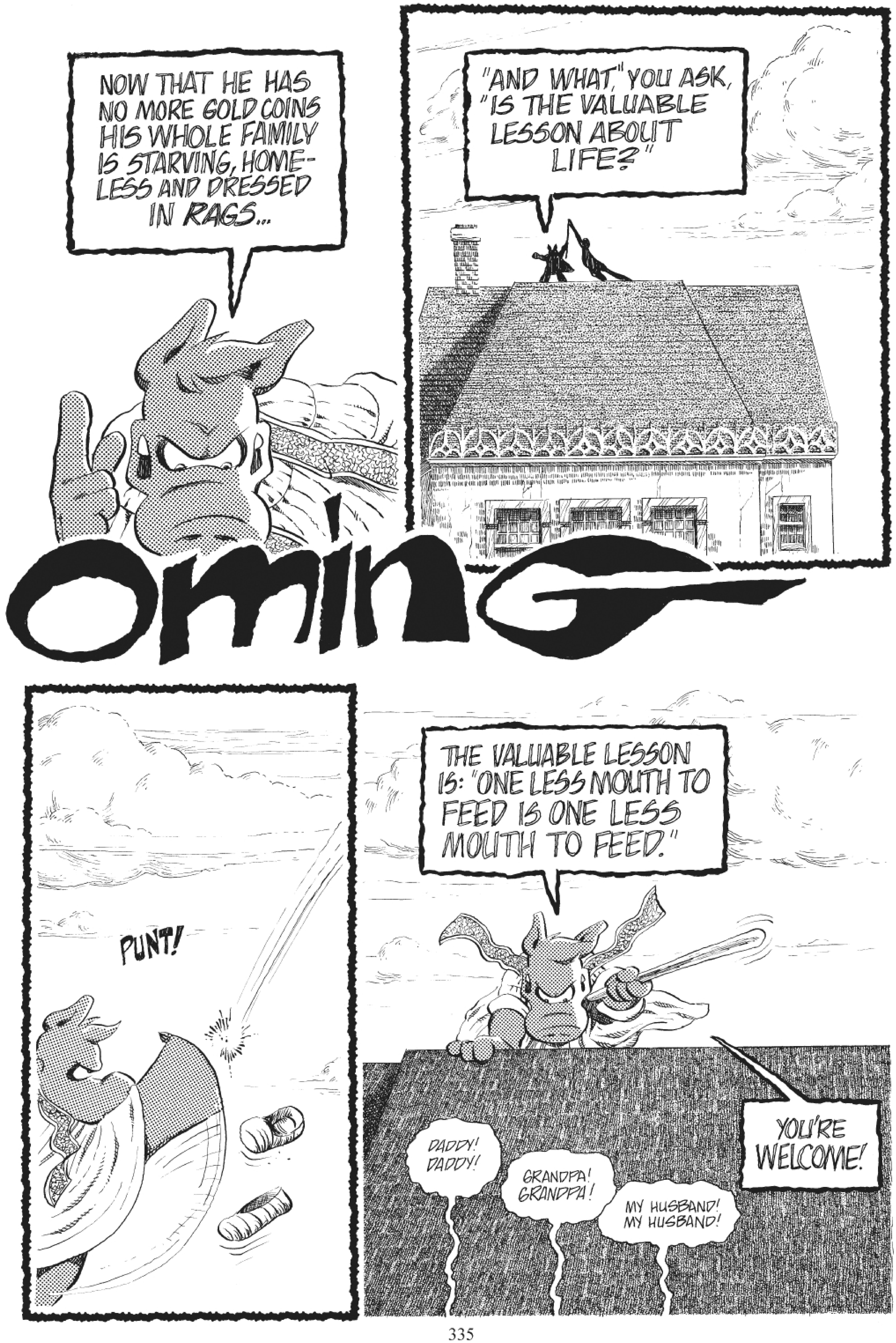

a listing of room charges from the desk clerk
...AND BOOBAH'S TRANSCRIPT ...
FOUR DIFFERENT PAGES WRITTEN BY FOUR DIFFERENT WRITERS IN FOUR DIFFERENT LOCATIONS IN IEST...
AND, YET, ALL FOUR, GREAT CEREBUS...
ARE IN YOUR HANDWRITING ...
FLIP
FLIP
FLIP
STICK AROUND-- AND TELL MOST HOLY IF YOU OBSERVE ANYTHING ELSE.
OF COURSE, GREAT CEREBUS...

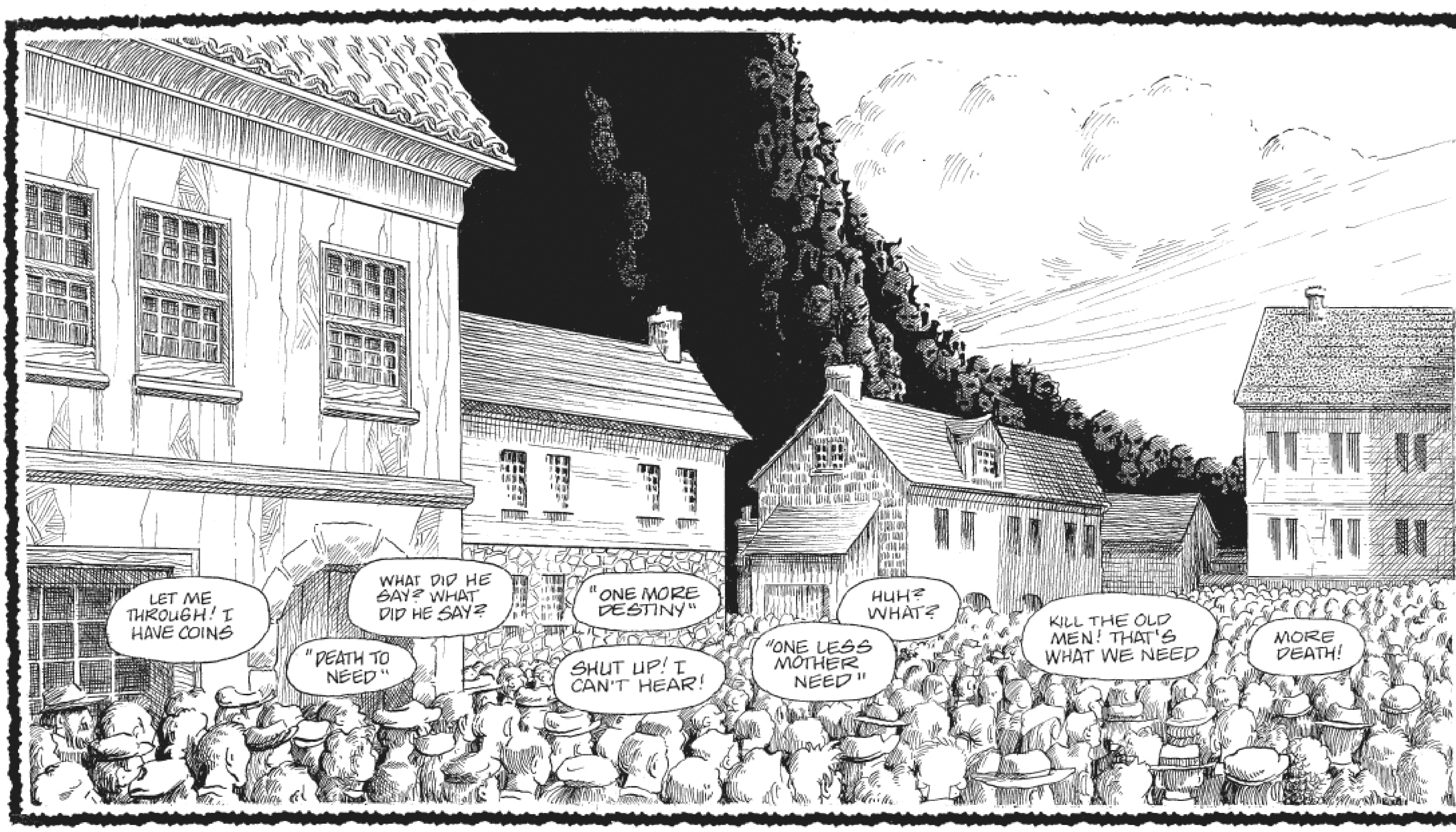
NEXT: ANOTHER THING COMING

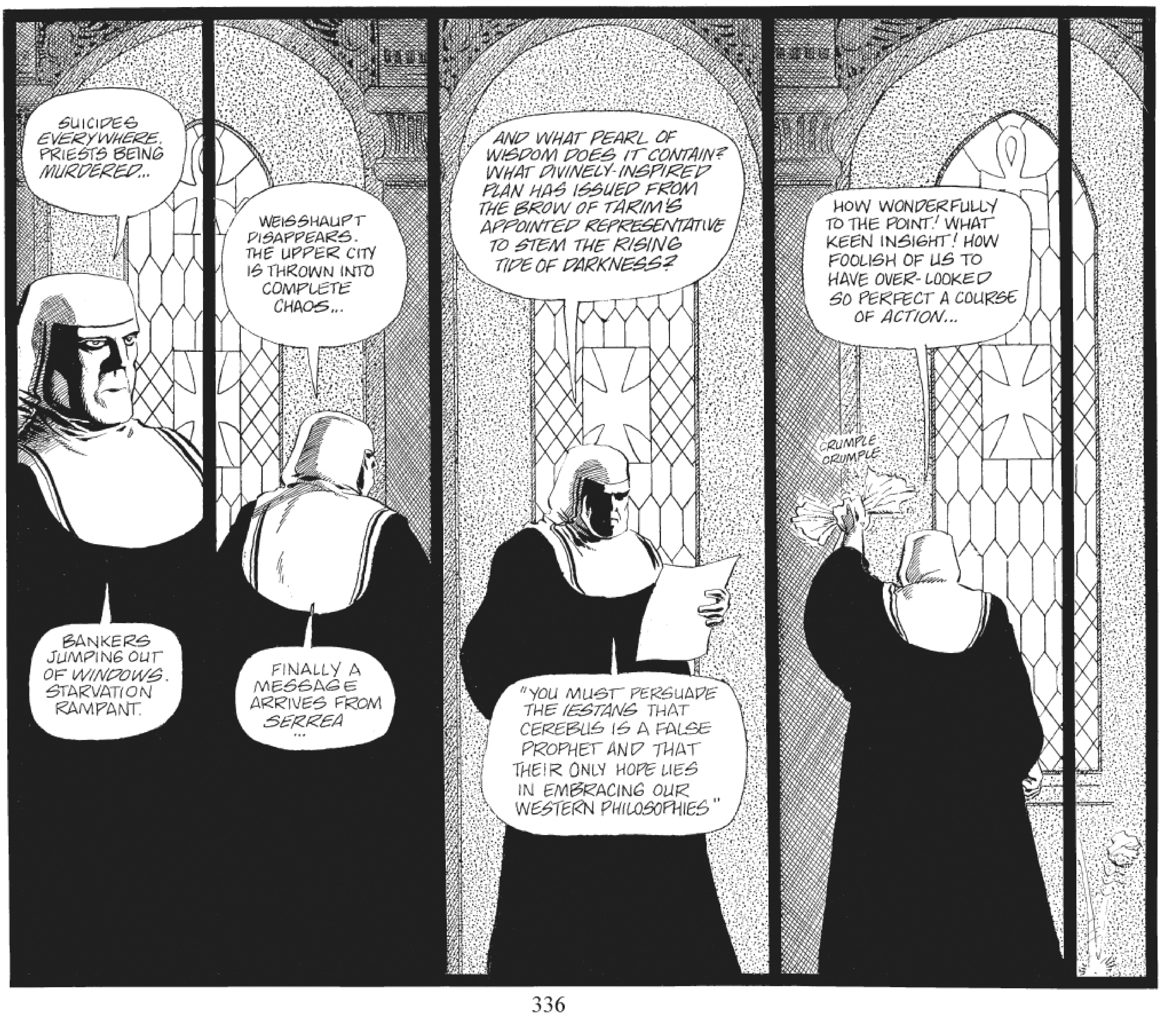

WITH SEVEN DAYS TO GO UNTIL TARIM DESTROYS THE WORLD, YOU ARE *FINALLY* GIVING HIM ENOUGH GOLD! TO SHOW HIS GRATITUDE, MOST HOLY IS GOING TO TEACH ALL OF YOU A VALUABLE LESSON ABOUT LIFE...

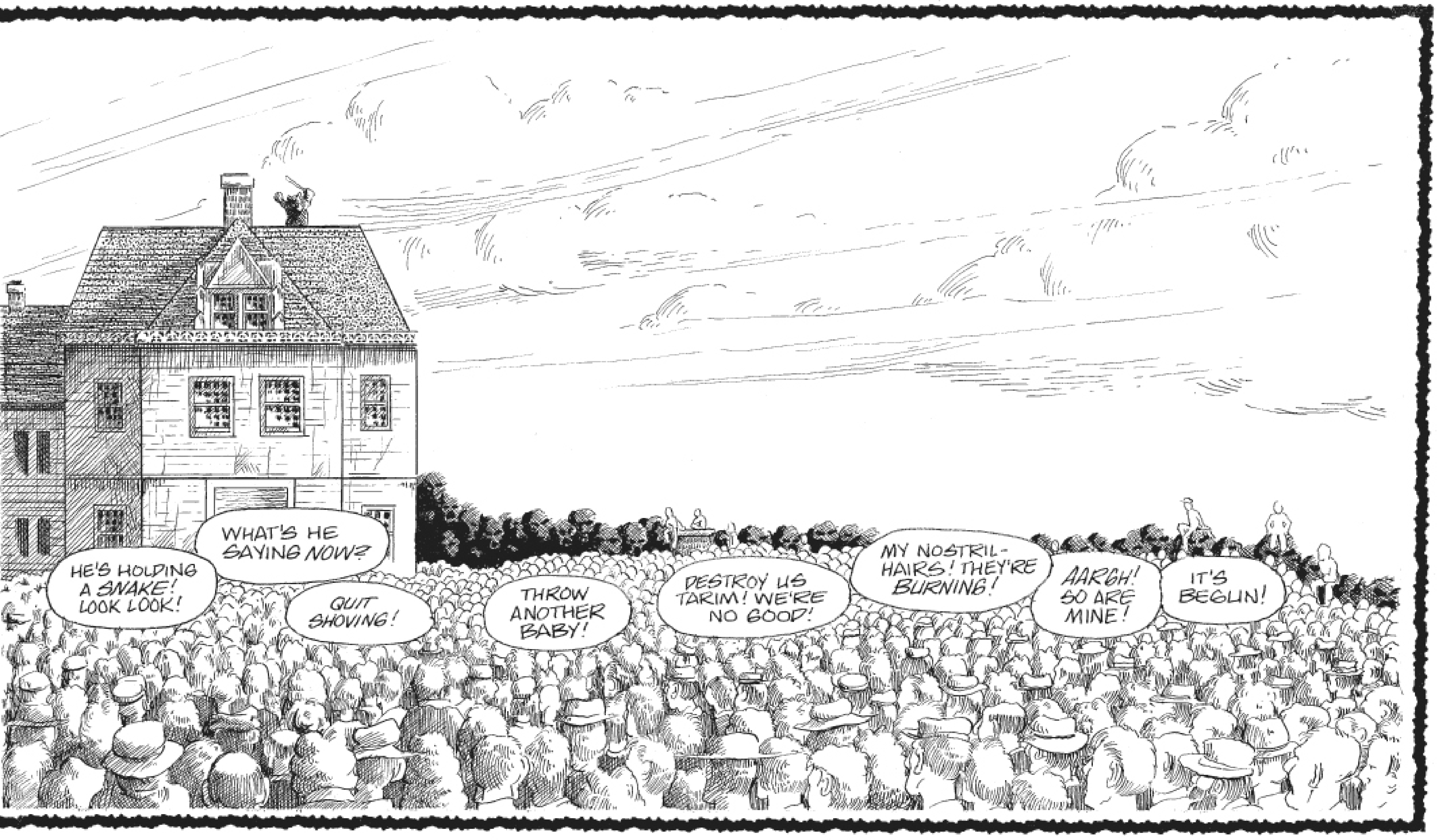
ANOT

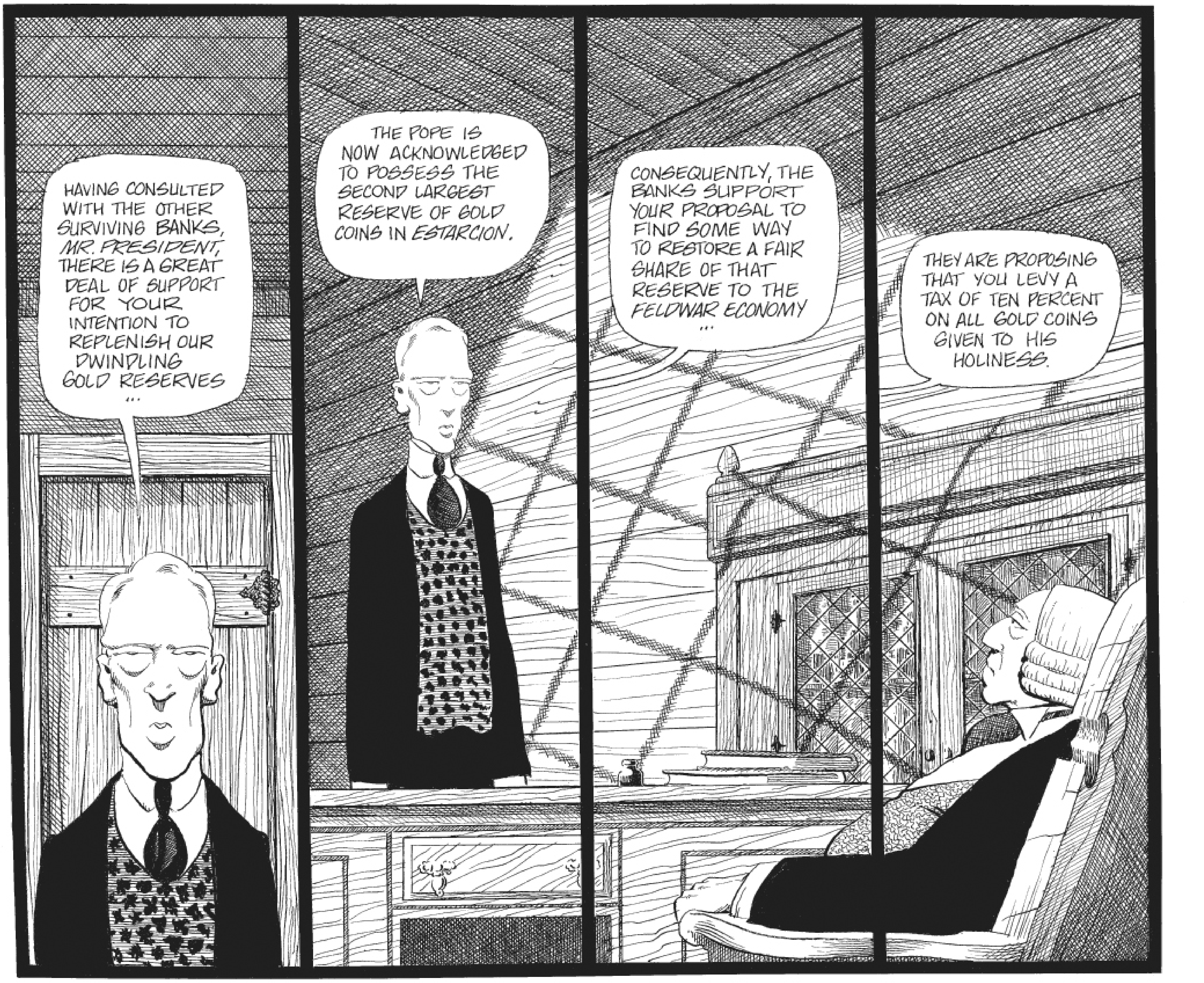

THIS MAN WAS ONE OF THE FIRST TO BRING MOST HOLY ALL OF HIS GOLD COINS! TWENTY OF THEM! TEN OF THEM HE USED TO PAY RENT!
her thing G
FOUR HE USED TO BUY FOOD AND CLOTHES FOR HIS WIFE, HIS SIX CHILDREN AND HIS THREE GRANDCHILDREN
THE OTHER SIX HE HAD INVESTED WISELY TO PROVIDE AN INCOME OF TWENTY COPPER BITS A MONTH!

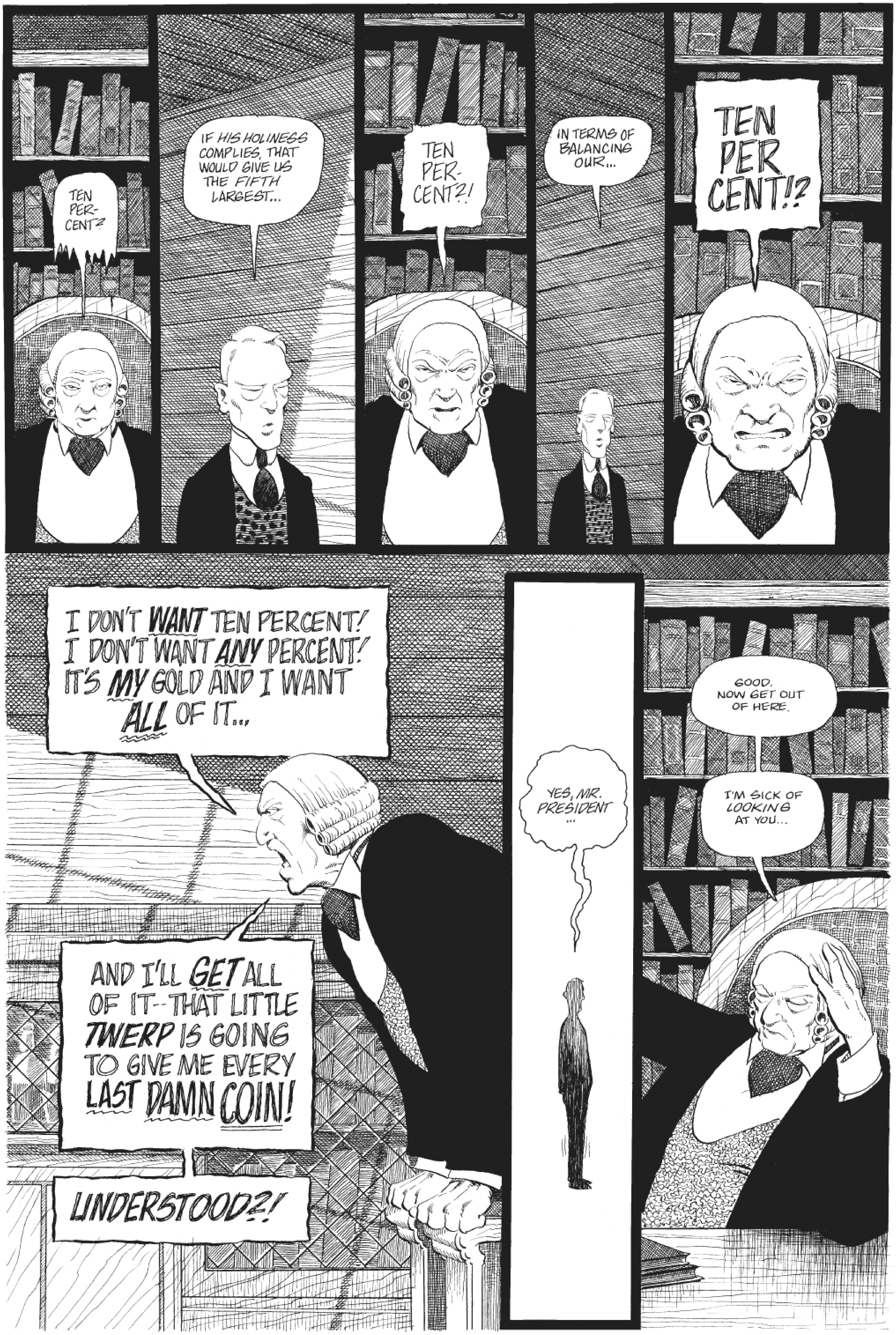

NOW THAT HE HAS NO MORE GOLD COINS HIS WHOLE FAMILY IS STARVING, HOMELESS AND DRESSED IN *RAGS*...
"AND WHAT," YOU ASK, "IS THE VALUABLE LESSON ABOUT LIFE?"
Oming
PUNT!
THE VALUABLE LESSON IS: "ONE LESS MOUTH TO FEED IS ONE LESS MOUTH TO FEED."
YOU'RE WELCOME!
DADDY! DADDY!
GRANDPA! GRANDPA!
MY HUSBAND! MY HUSBAND!

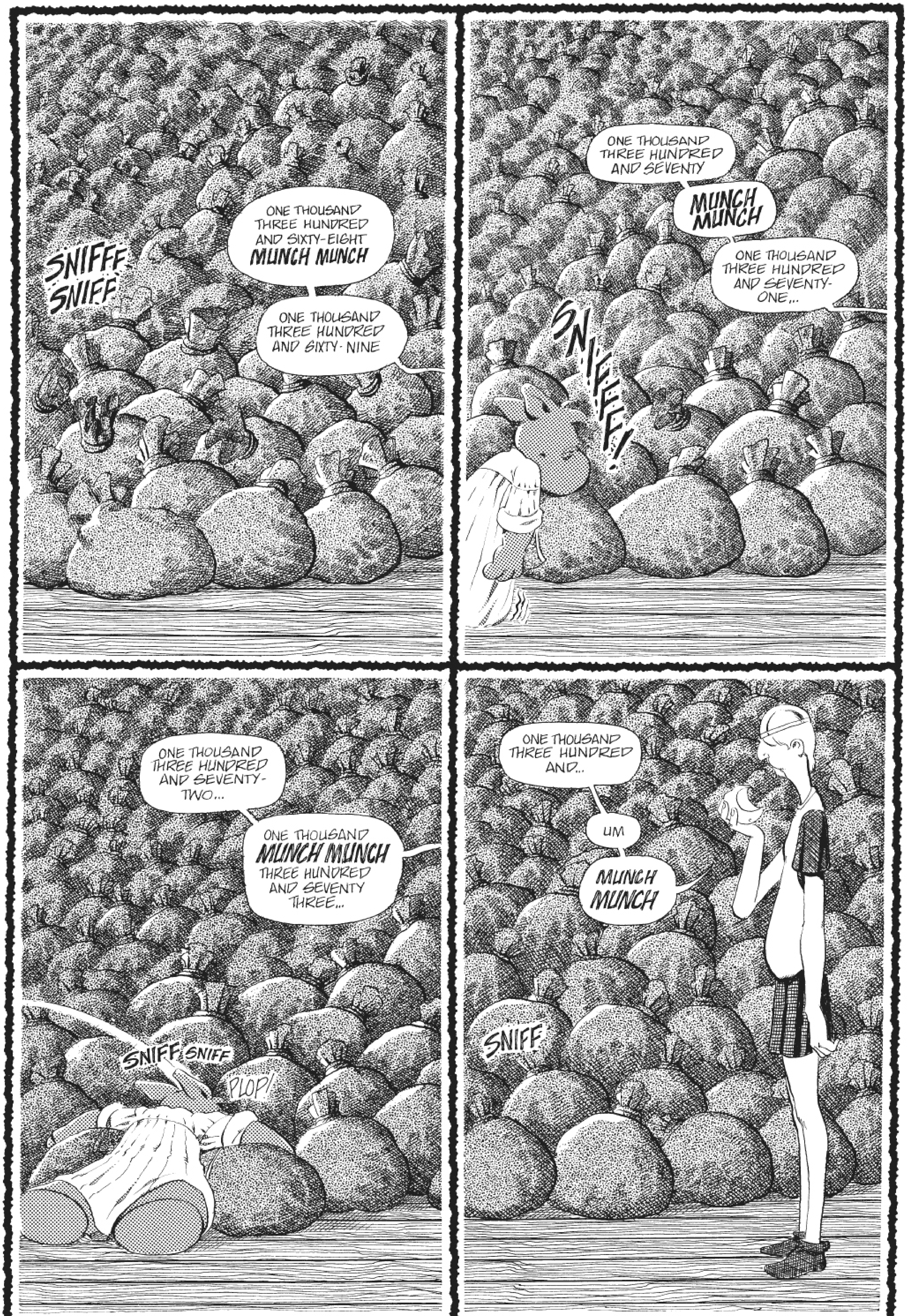

LET ME THROUGH! I HAVE COINS
WHAT DID HE SAY? WHAT DID HE SAY?
"DEATH TO NEED"
"ONE MORE DESTINY"
SHUT UP! I CAN'T HEAR!
"ONE LESS MOTHER NEED"
HUH? WHAT?
KILL THE OLD MEN! THAT'S WHAT WE NEED
MORE DEATH!

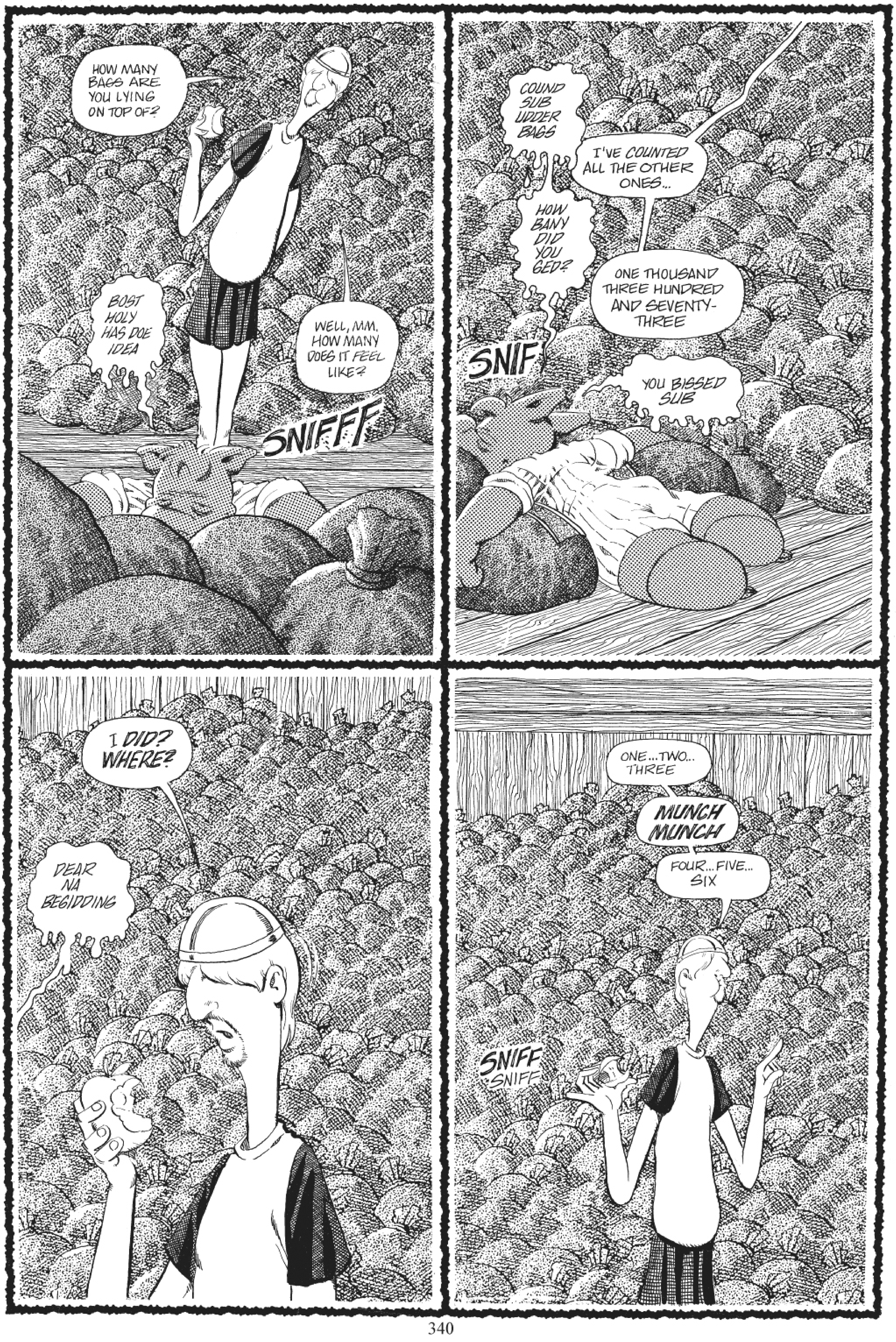

SUICIDES EVERYWHERE. PRIESTS BEING *MURDERED*...
BANKERS JUMPING OUT OF *WINDOWS*. STARVATION RAMPANT.
WEISSHAUPT DISAPPEARS. THE UPPER CITY IS THROWN INTO COMPLETE CHAOS...
FINALLY A MESSAGE ARRIVES FROM *SERREA* ...
AND WHAT PEARL OF WISDOM DOES IT CONTAIN? WHAT DIVINELY-INSPIRED PLAN HAS ISSUED FROM THE BROW OF TARIM'S APPOINTED REPRESENTATIVE TO STEM THE RISING TIDE OF DARKNESS?
"YOU MUST PERSUADE THE IESTANS THAT CEREBUS IS A FALSE PROPHET AND THAT THEIR ONLY HOPE LIES IN EMBRACING OUR WESTERN PHILOSOPHIES"
HOW WONDERFULLY TO THE POINT! WHAT KEEN INSIGHT! HOW FOOLISH OF US TO HAVE OVER-LOOKED SO PERFECT A COURSE OF ACTION...
CRUMPLE CRUMPLE

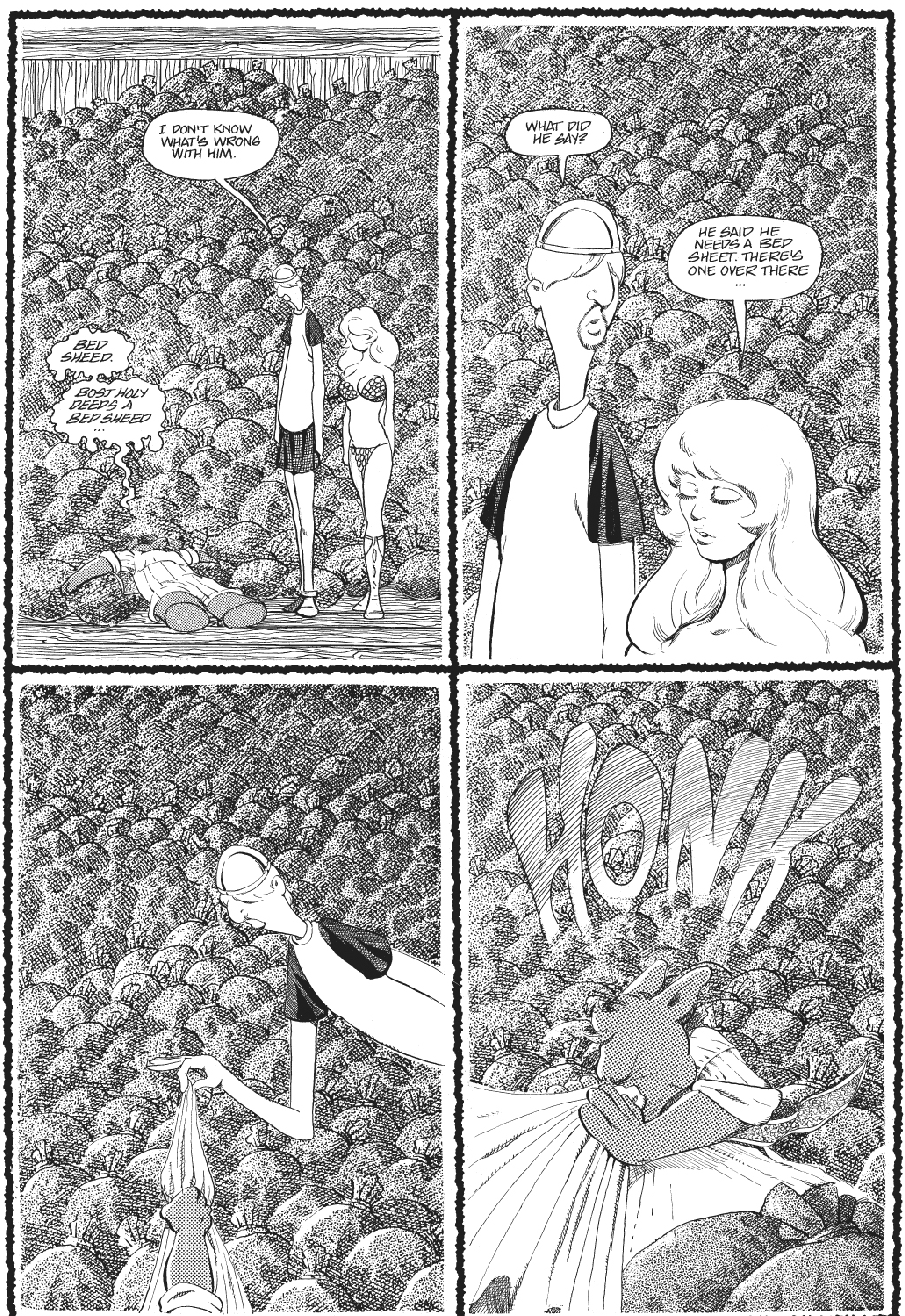

WHAT'S HE SAYING *NOW*?
HE'S HOLDING A *SNAKE*! LOOK LOOK!
QUIT SHOVING!
THROW ANOTHER BABY!
DESTROY US TARIM! WE'RE NO GOOD!
MY NOSTRIL-HAIRS! THEY'RE *BURNING*!
AARGH! SO ARE MINE!
IT'S BEGUN!

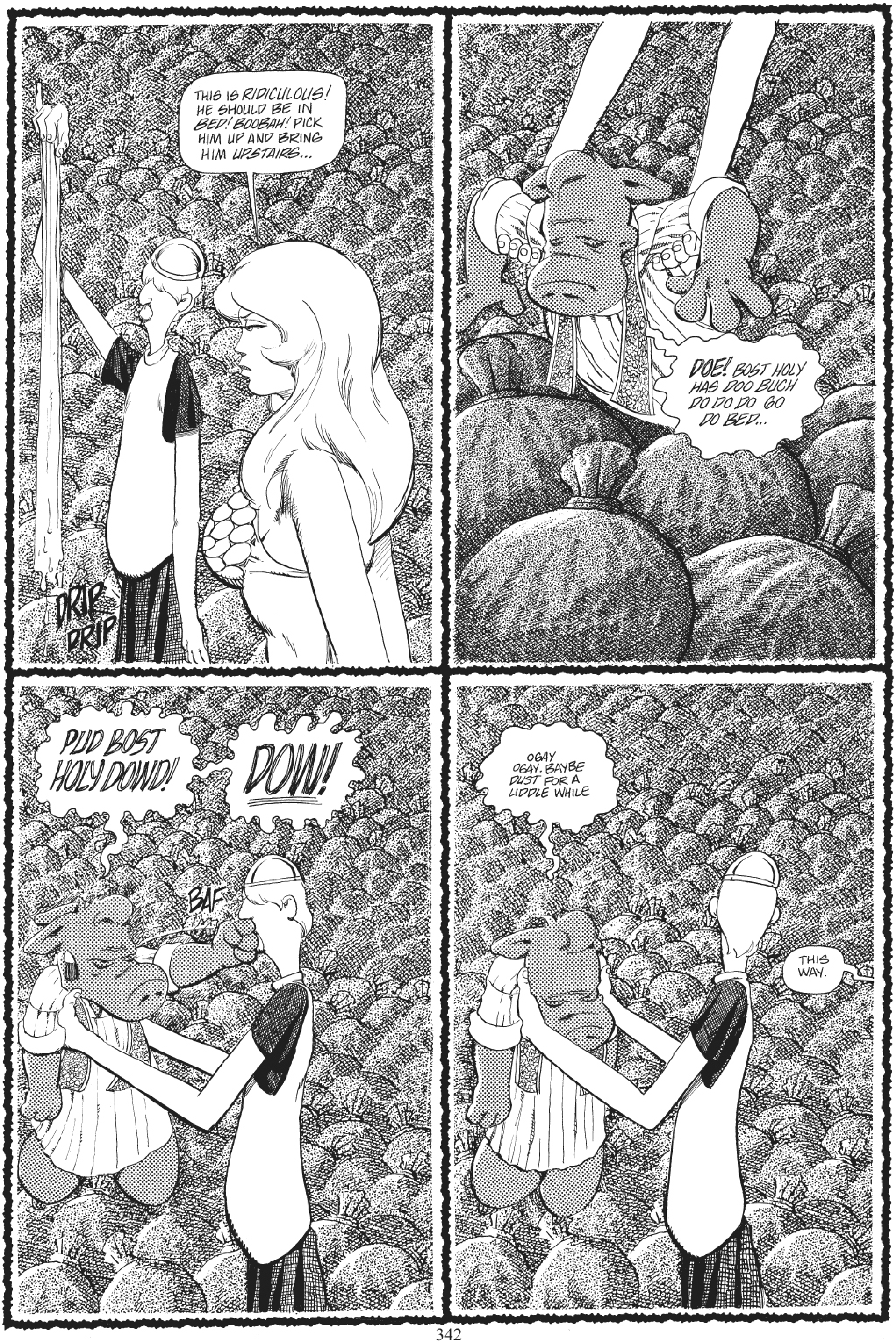

HAVING CONSULTED WITH THE OTHER SURVIVING BANKS, *MR. PRESIDENT*, THERE IS A GREAT DEAL OF SUPPORT FOR YOUR INTENTION TO REPLENISH OUR DWINDLING GOLD RESERVES ...
THE POPE IS NOW ACKNOWLEDGED TO POSSESS THE SECOND LARGEST RESERVE OF GOLD COINS IN *ESTARCION*.
CONSEQUENTLY, THE BANKS SUPPORT YOUR PROPOSAL TO FIND SOME WAY TO RESTORE A FAIR SHARE OF THAT RESERVE TO THE *FELDWAR ECONOMY* ...
THEY ARE PROPOSING THAT YOU LEVY A TAX OF TEN PERCENT ON ALL GOLD COINS GIVEN TO HIS HOLINESS.

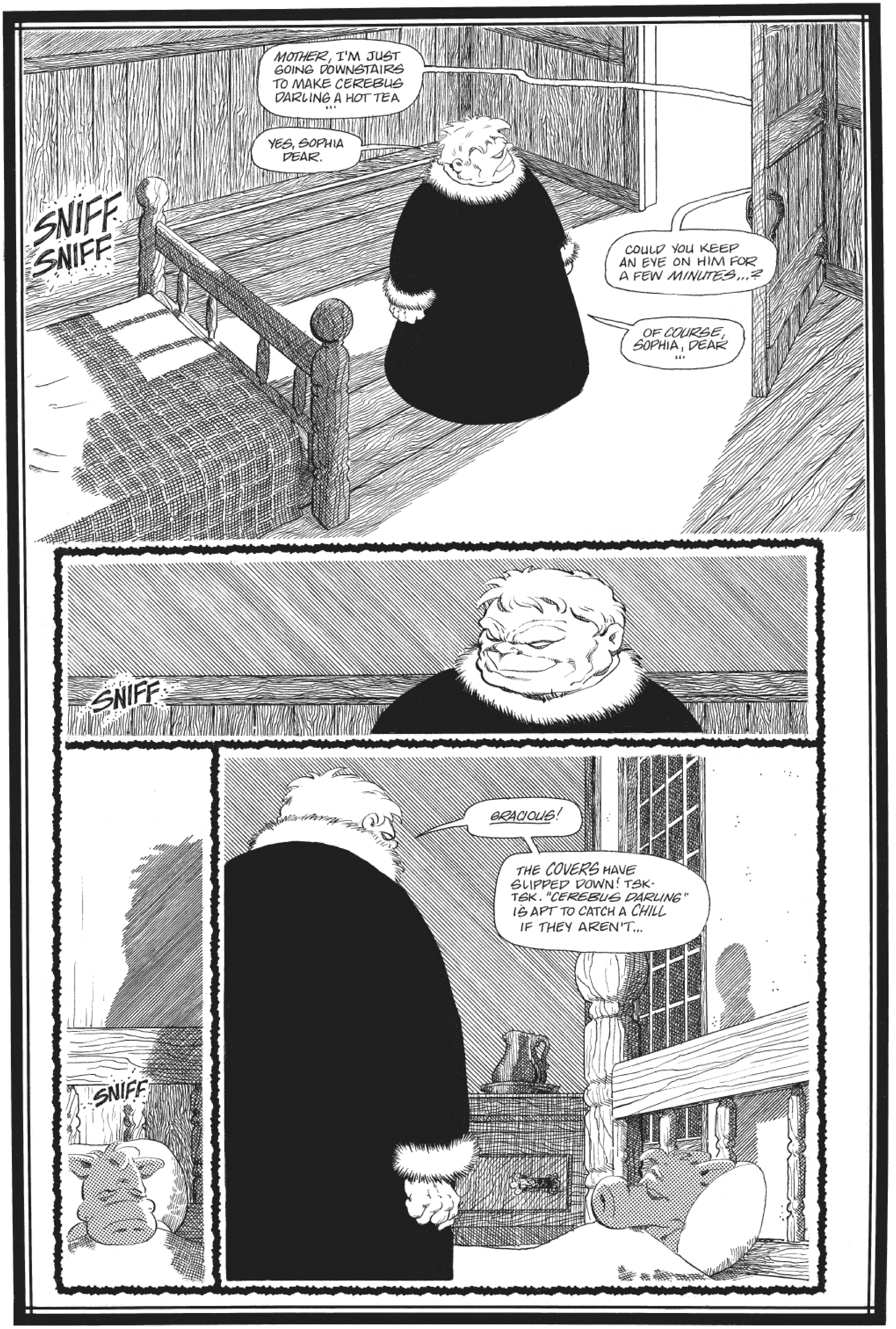

TEN PER-CENT?
IF HIS HOLINESS COMPLIES, THAT WOULD GIVE US THE FIFTH LARGEST...
TEN PER-CENT?!
IN TERMS OF BALANCING OUR...
TEN PER CENT!?
I DON'T WANT TEN PERCENT! I DON'T WANT ANY PERCENT! IT'S MY GOLD AND I WANT ALL OF IT...
AND I'LL GET ALL OF IT--THAT LITTLE TWERP IS GOING TO GIVE ME EVERY LAST DAMN COIN!
UNDERSTOOD?!
YES, MR. PRESIDENT ...
GOOD. NOW GET OUT OF HERE.
I'M SICK OF LOOKING AT YOU...

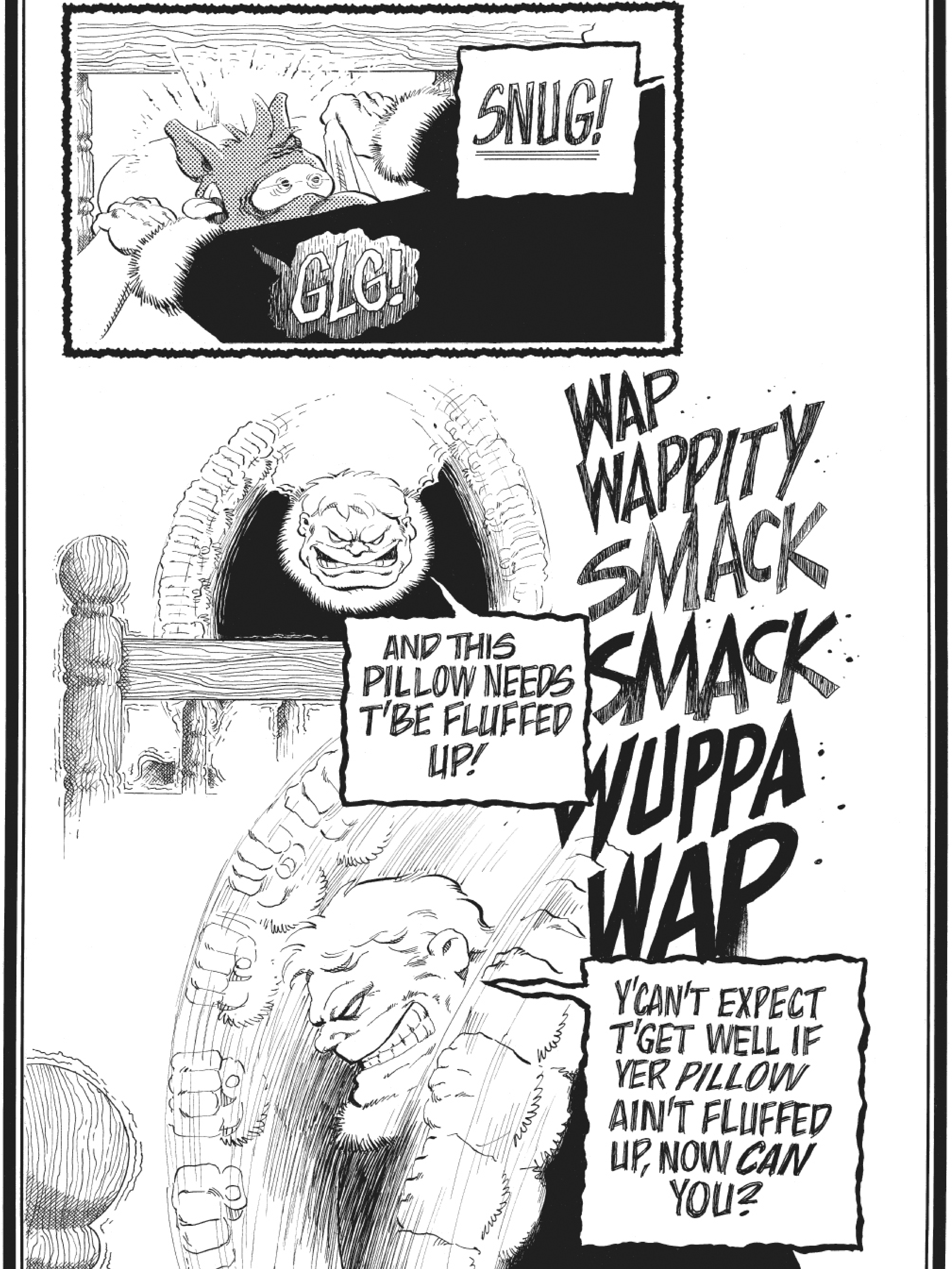

SNIFFF SNIFF
ONE THOUSAND THREE HUNDRED AND SIXTY-EIGHT **MUNCH MUNCH**
ONE THOUSAND THREE HUNDRED AND SIXTY-NINE
ONE THOUSAND THREE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY
MUNCH MUNCH
ONE THOUSAND THREE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-ONE...
SNIFFF!
ONE THOUSAND THREE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-TWO...
ONE THOUSAND **MUNCH MUNCH** THREE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY THREE...
SNIFF SNIFF
PLOP!
ONE THOUSAND THREE HUNDRED AND...
UM
MUNCH MUNCH
SNIFF

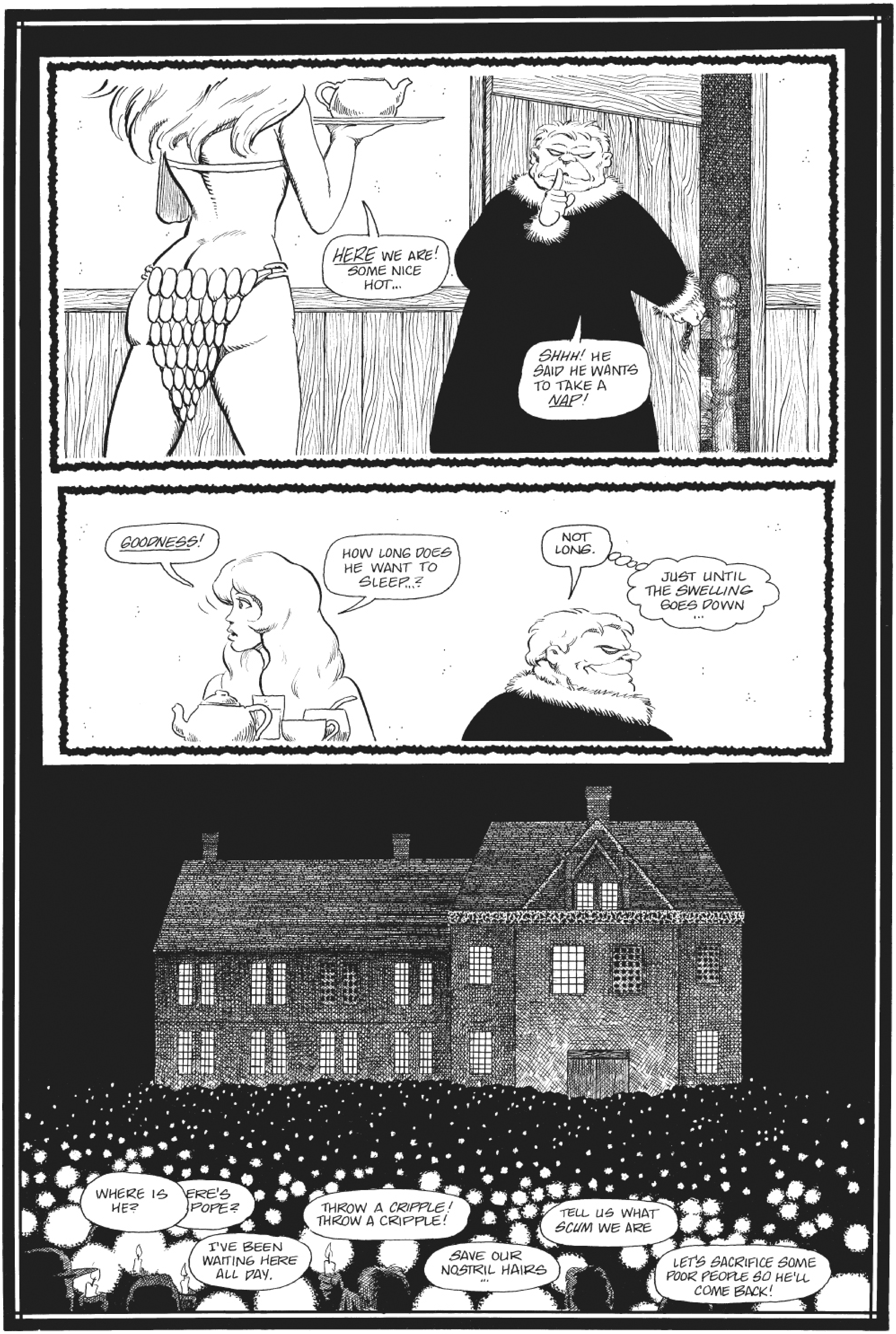

HOW MANY BAGS ARE YOU LYING ON TOP OF?
BOST HOLY HAS DOE IDEA
WELL, MM, HOW MANY DOES IT FEEL LIKE?
SNIFFF
COUND SUB UDDER BAGS
I'VE COUNTED ALL THE OTHER ONES...
HOW BANY DID YOU GED?
ONE THOUSAND THREE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-THREE
SNIF
YOU BISSED SUB
I DID? WHERE?
DEAR NA BEGIDDING
ONE...TWO... THREE
MUNCH MUNCH
FOUR...FIVE... SIX
SNIFF SNIFF

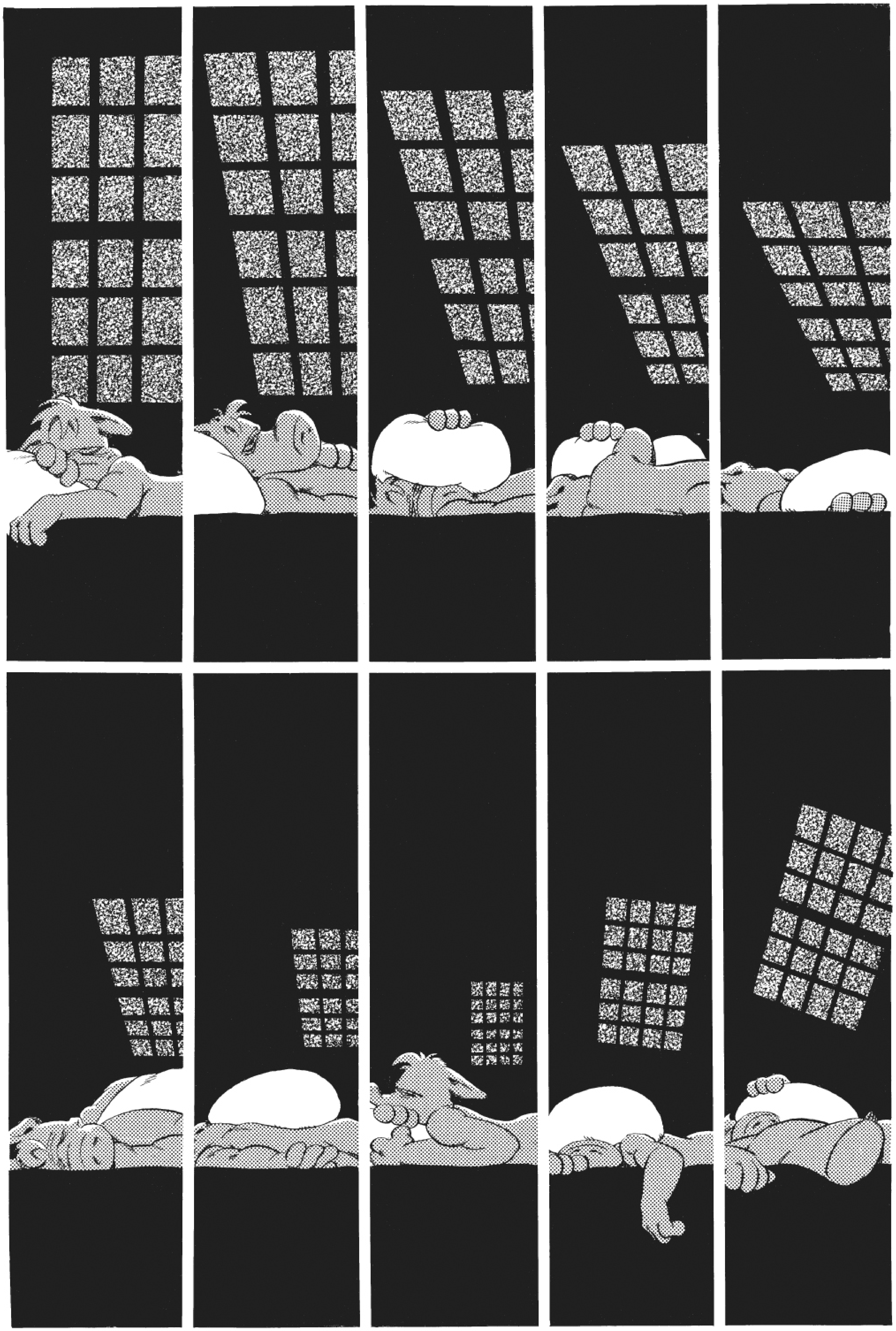

I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S WRONG WITH HIM.
BED SHEED.
BOST HOLY DEEDS A BED SHEED ...
WHAT DID HE SAY?
HE SAID HE NEEDS A BED SHEET. THERE'S ONE OVER THERE ...
HONK!

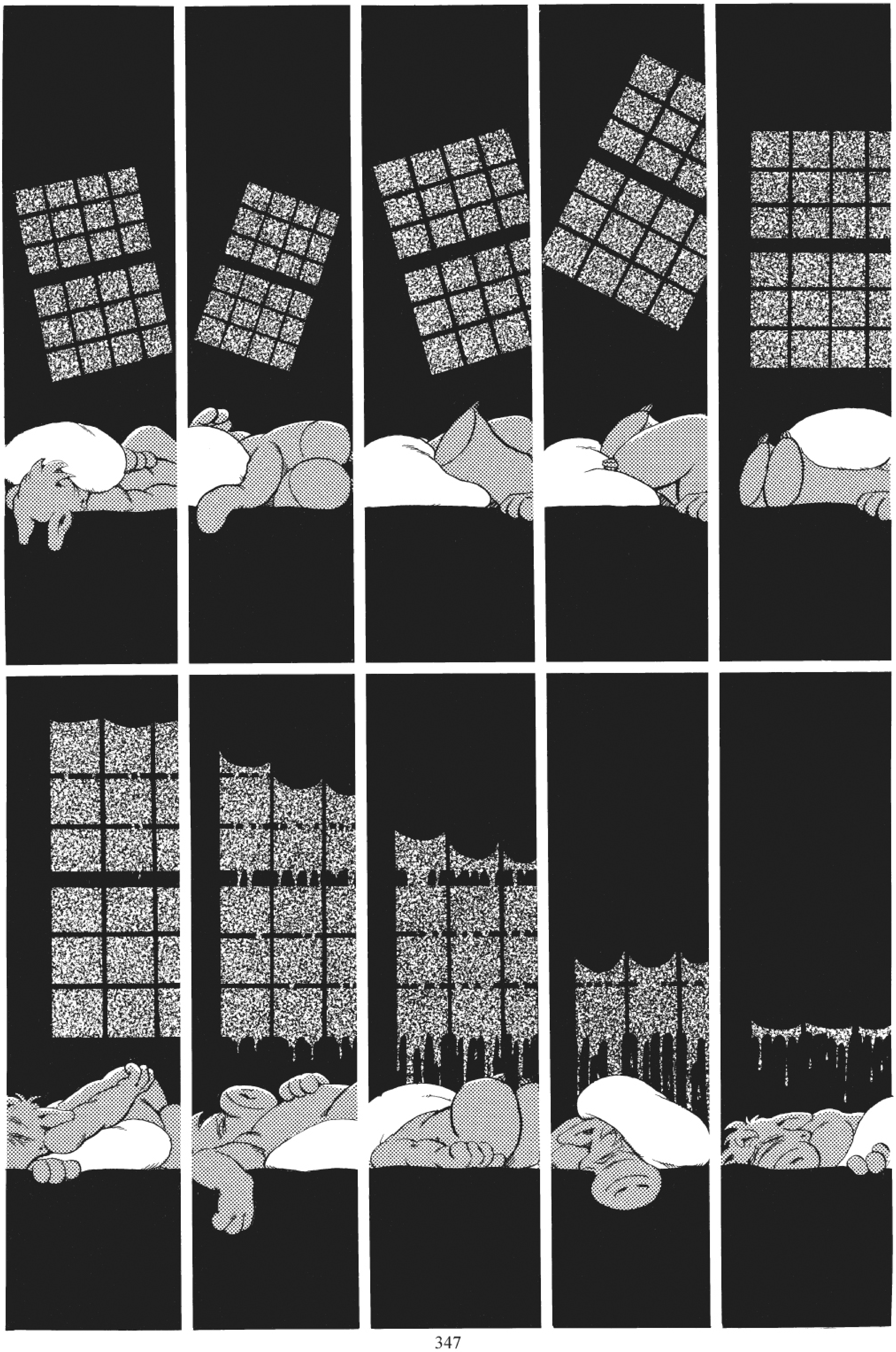

THIS IS RIDICULOUS! HE SHOULD BE IN BED! BOOBAH! PICK HIM UP AND BRING HIM UPSTAIRS...
DRIP DRIP
DOE! BOST HOLY HAS DOO BUCH DO DO DO GO DO BED...
PUD BOST HOLY DOWD!
DOW!
BAF
OGAY OGAY. BAYBE DUST FOR A LIDDLE WHILE
THIS WAY.

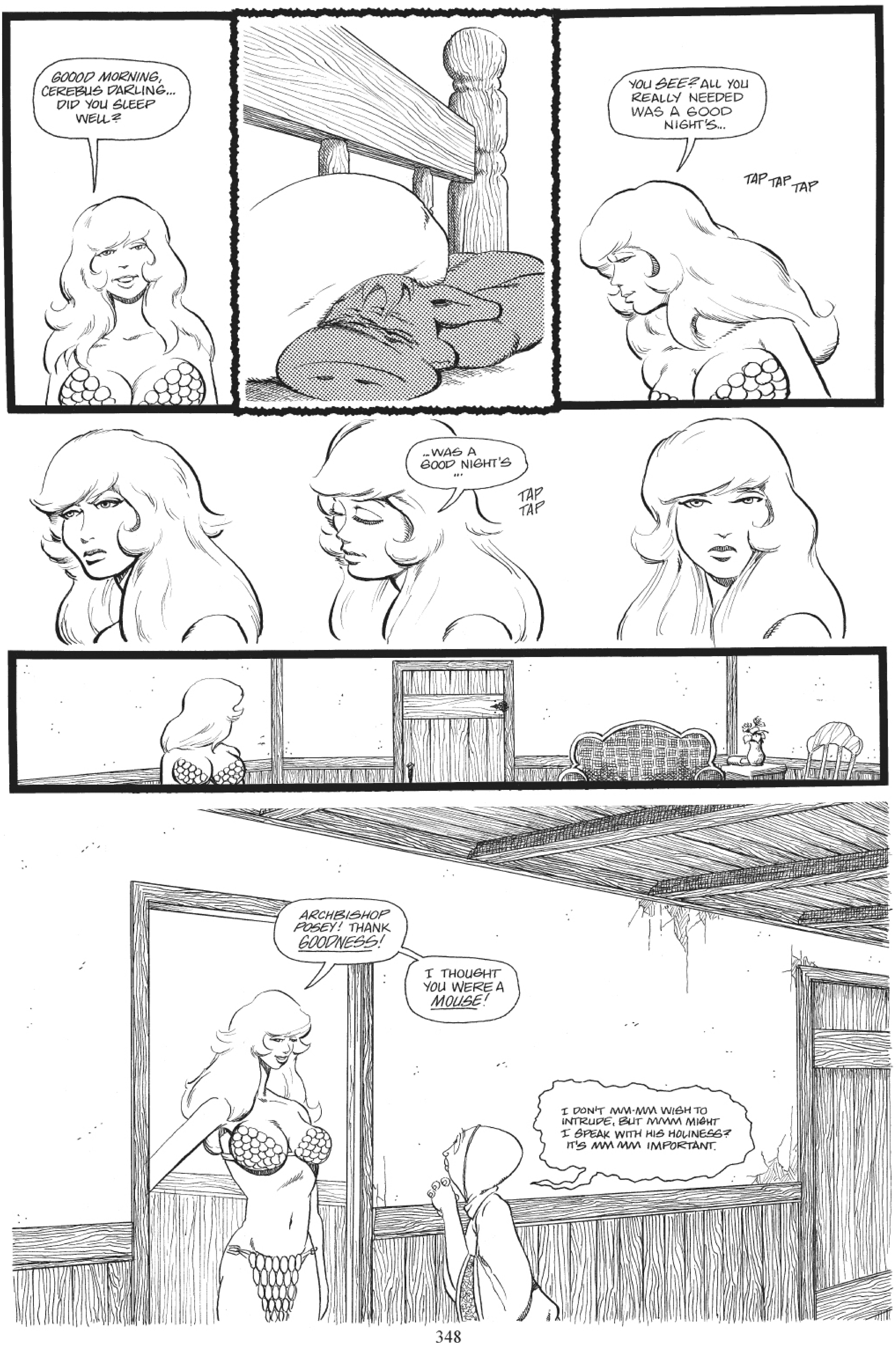

MOTHER, I'M JUST GOING DOWNSTAIRS TO MAKE CEREBUS DARLING A HOT TEA ...
YES, SOPHIA DEAR.
SNIFF SNIFF
COULD YOU KEEP AN EYE ON HIM FOR A FEW MINUTES...?
OF COURSE, SOPHIA, DEAR ...
SNIFF
SNIFF
GRACIOUS!
THE COVERS HAVE SLIPPED DOWN! TSK-TSK. "CEREBUS DARLING" IS APT TO CATCH A CHILL IF THEY AREN'T...

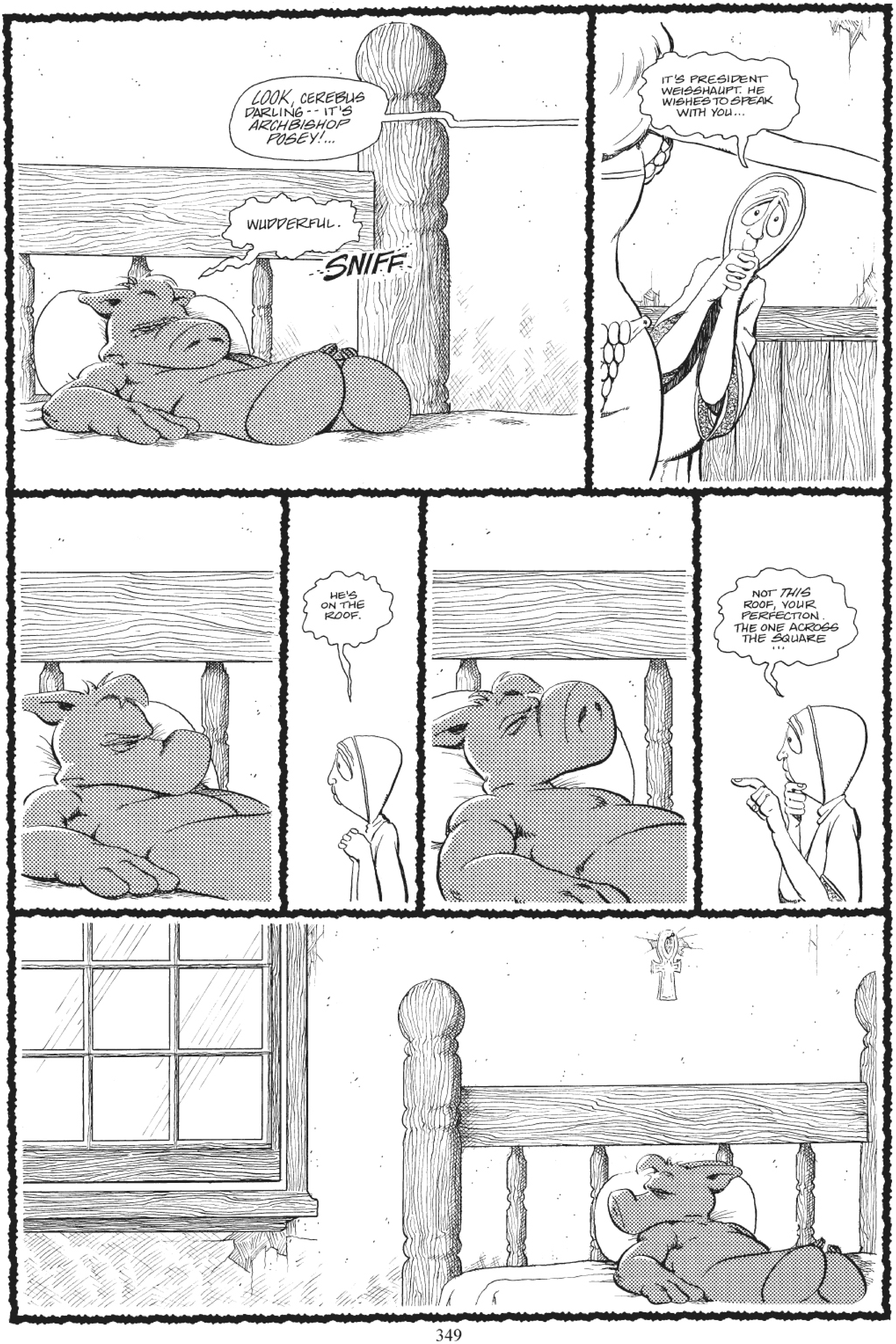

SNUG!
GLG!
WAP WAPPITY SMACK SMACK WUPPA WAP
AND THIS PILLOW NEEDS T'BE FLUFFED UP!
Y'CAN'T EXPECT T'GET WELL IF YER *PILLOW* AIN'T FLUFFED UP, NOW *CAN* YOU?

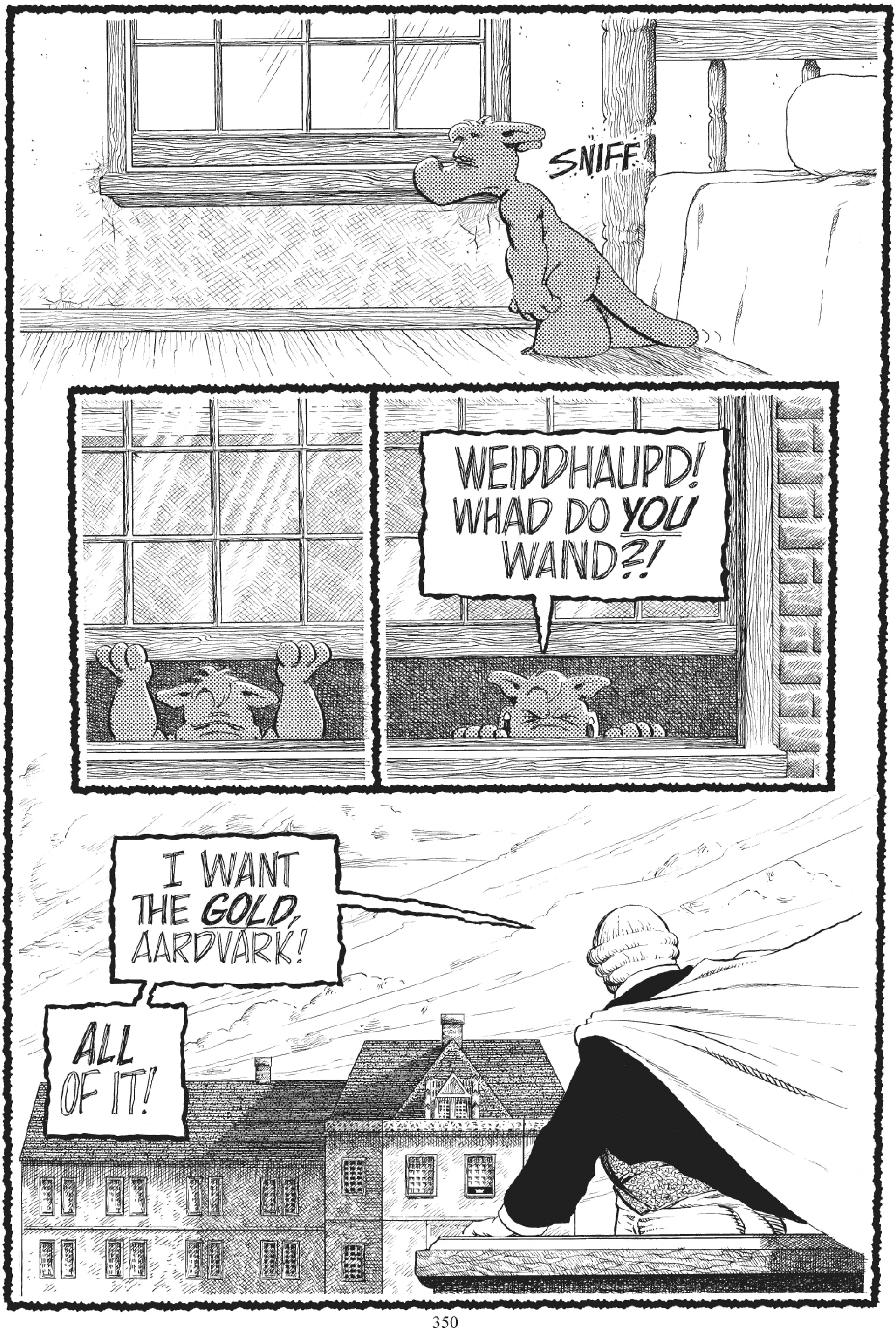

HERE WE ARE! SOME NICE HOT...
SHHH! HE SAID HE WANTS TO TAKE A NAP!
GOODNESS!
HOW LONG DOES HE WANT TO SLEEP...?
NOT LONG.
JUST UNTIL THE SWELLING GOES DOWN ...
WHERE IS HE?
ERE'S POPE?
THROW A CRIPPLE! THROW A CRIPPLE!
TELL US WHAT SCUM WE ARE
I'VE BEEN WAITING HERE ALL DAY.
SAVE OUR NOSTRIL HAIRS ...
LET'S SACRIFICE SOME POOR PEOPLE SO HE'LL COME BACK!

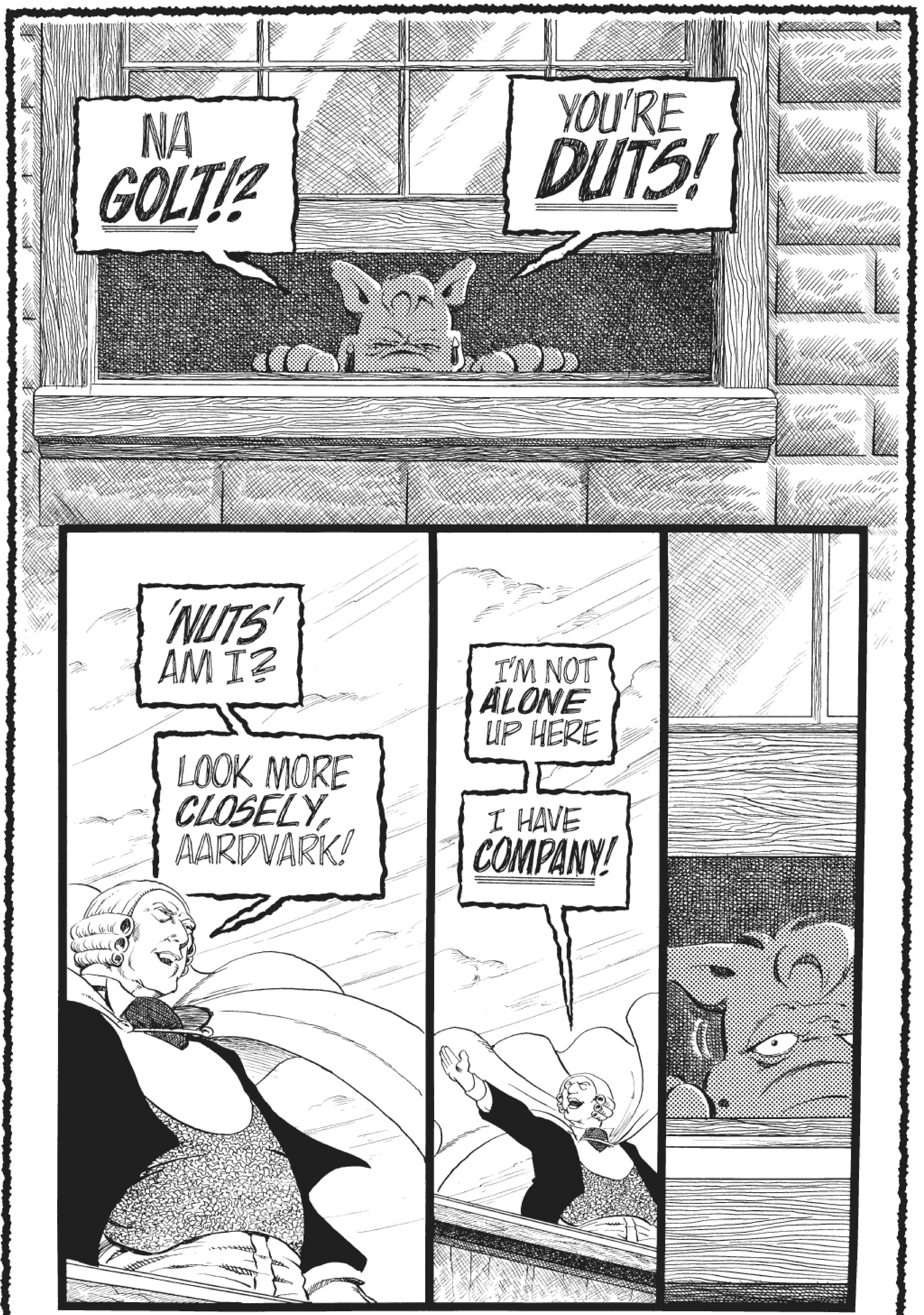


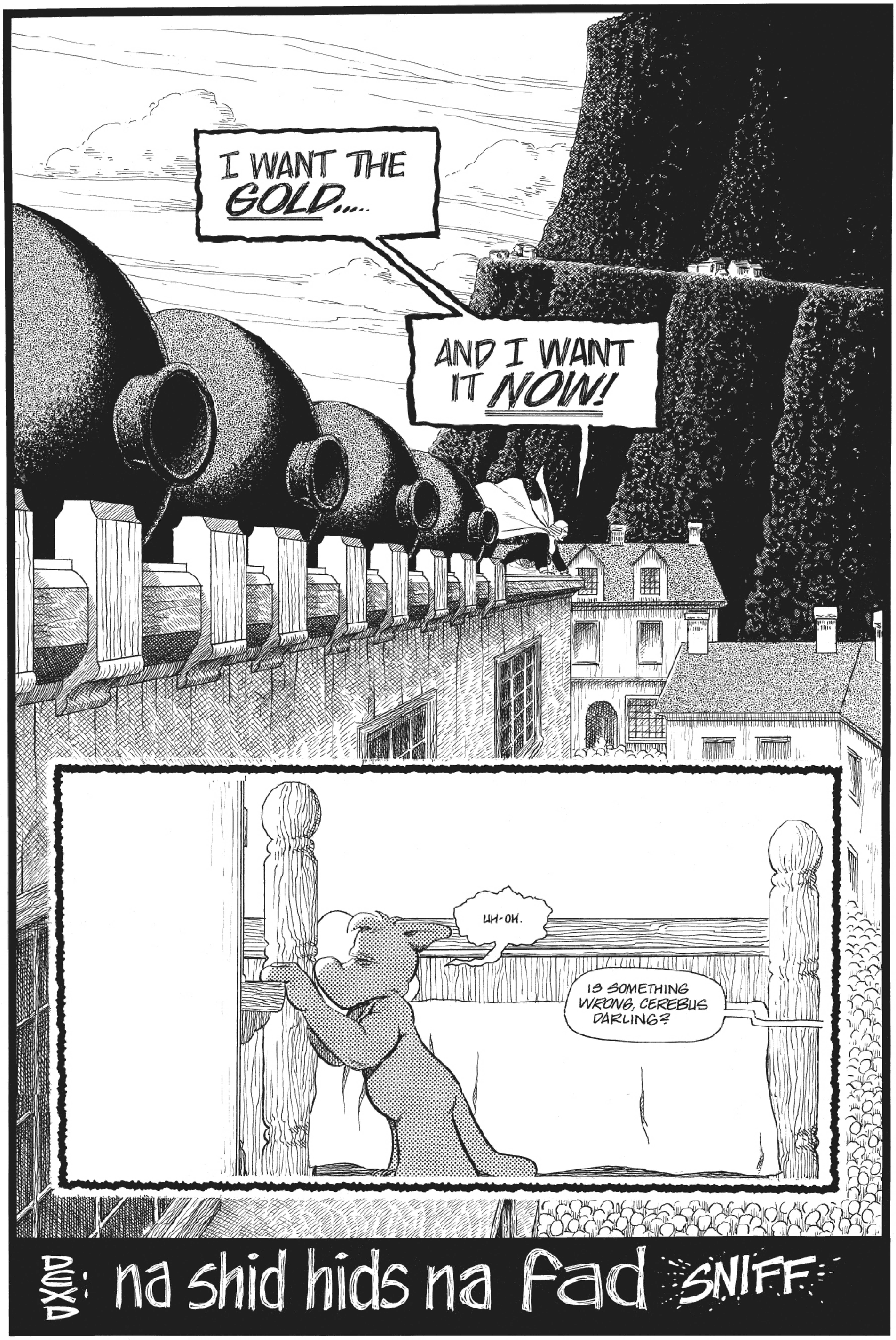


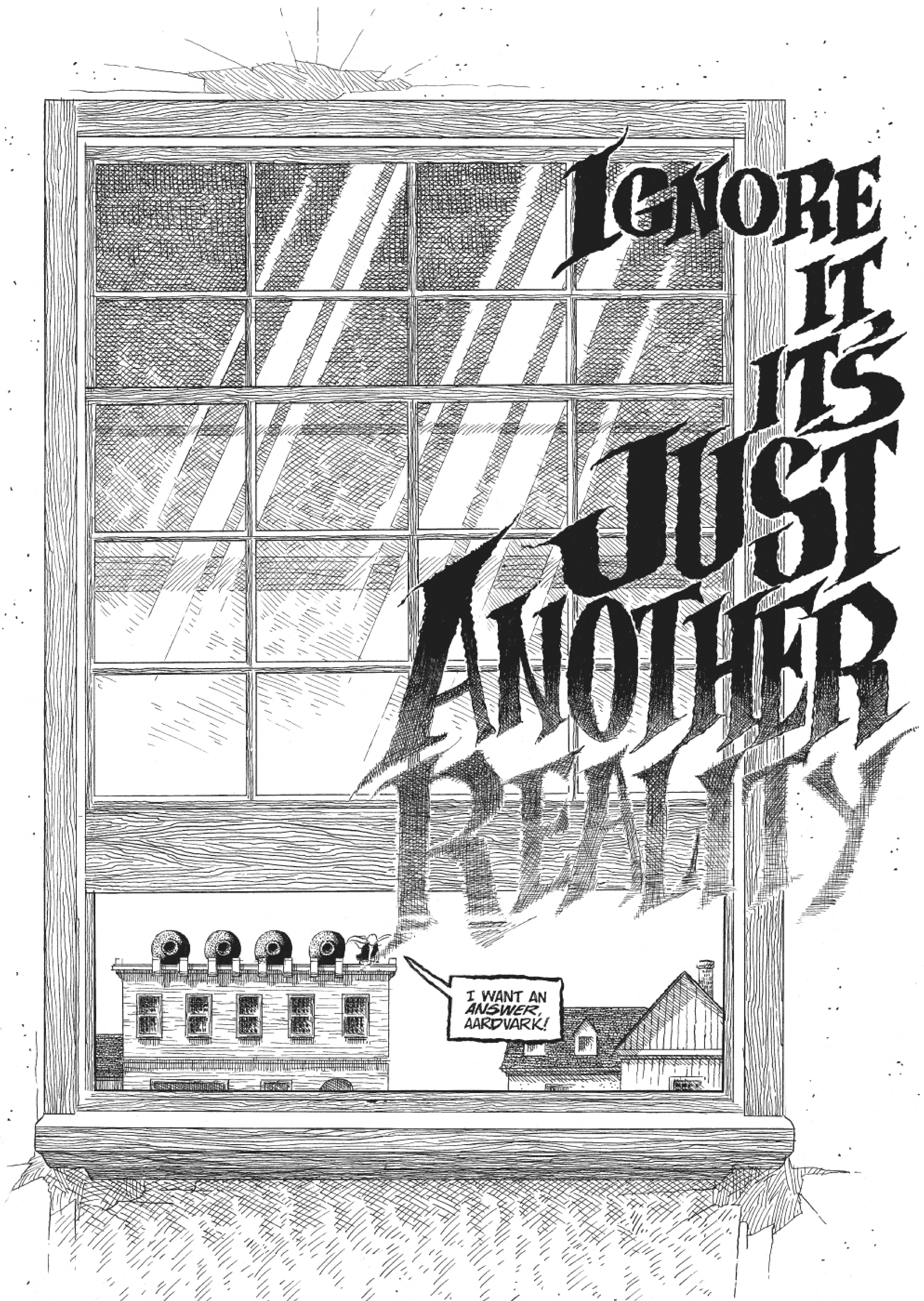

GOOOD MORNING, CEREBUS DARLING... DID YOU SLEEP WELL?
YOU SEE? ALL YOU REALLY NEEDED WAS A GOOD NIGHT'S...
TAP TAP TAP
..WAS A GOOD NIGHT'S ...
TAP TAP
ARCHBISHOP POSEY! THANK GOODNESS!
I THOUGHT YOU WERE A MOUSE!
I DON'T MM-MM WISH TO INTRUDE, BUT MMMM MIGHT I SPEAK WITH HIS HOLINESS? IT'S MM MM IMPORTANT.

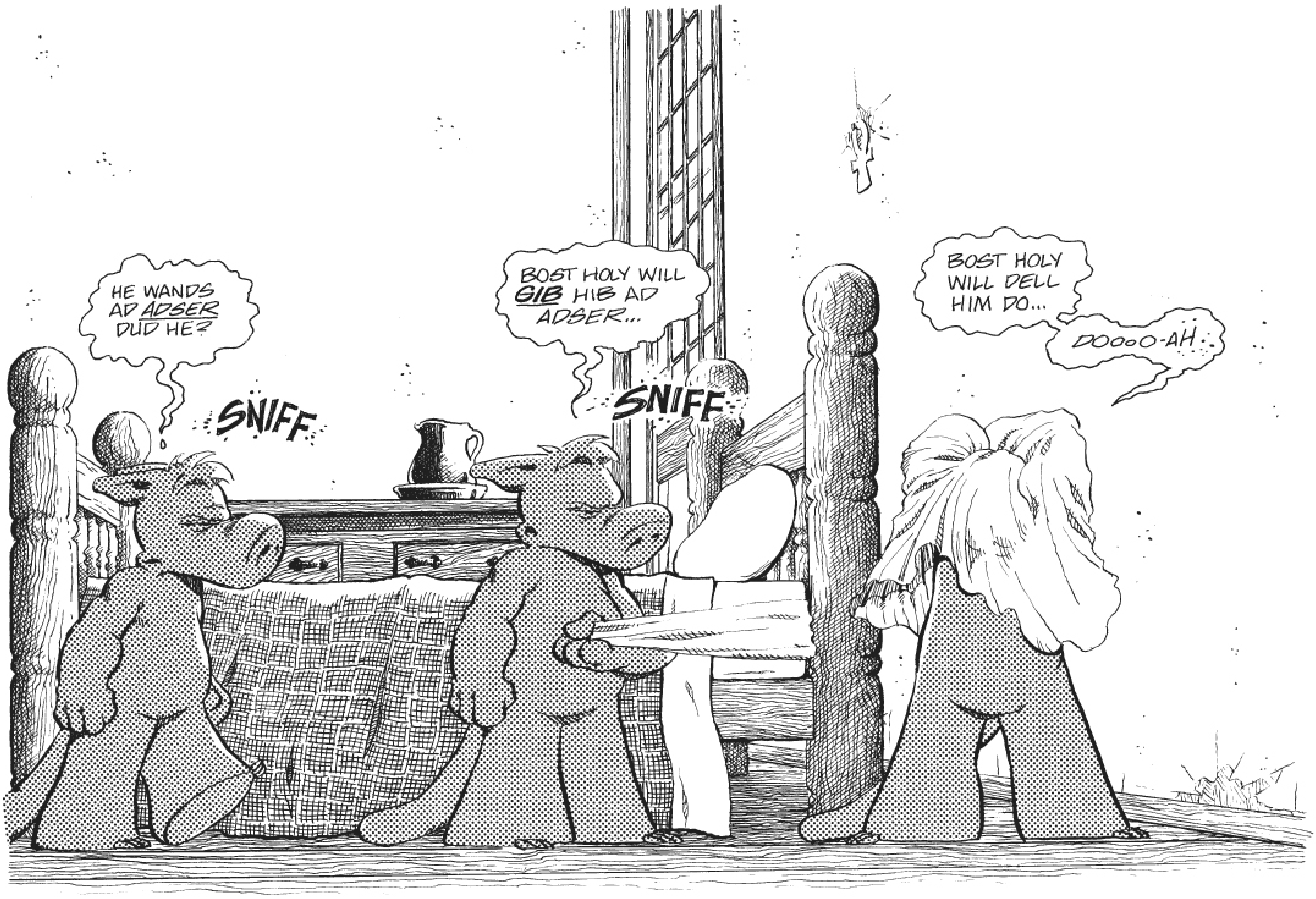

LOOK, CEREBUS DARLING -- IT'S ARCHBISHOP POSEY!...
WUDDERFUL.
SNIFF
IT'S PRESIDENT WEISSHAUPT. HE WISHES TO SPEAK WITH YOU...
HE'S ON THE ROOF.
NOT THIS ROOF, YOUR PERFECTION. THE ONE ACROSS THE SQUARE ...

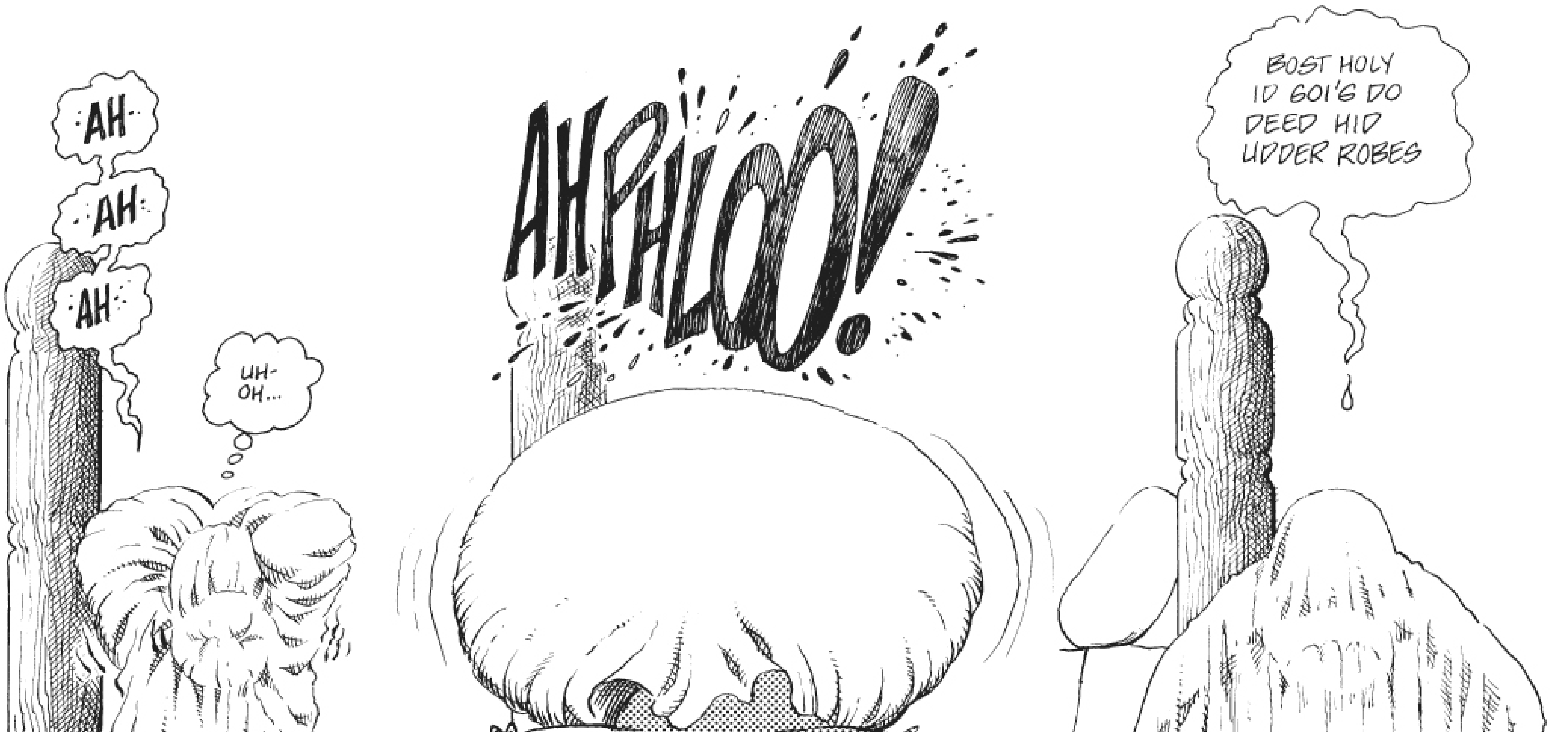

SNIFF
WEIDDHAUPD! WHAD DO YOU WAND?!
I WANT THE GOLD, AARDVARK!
ALL OF IT!

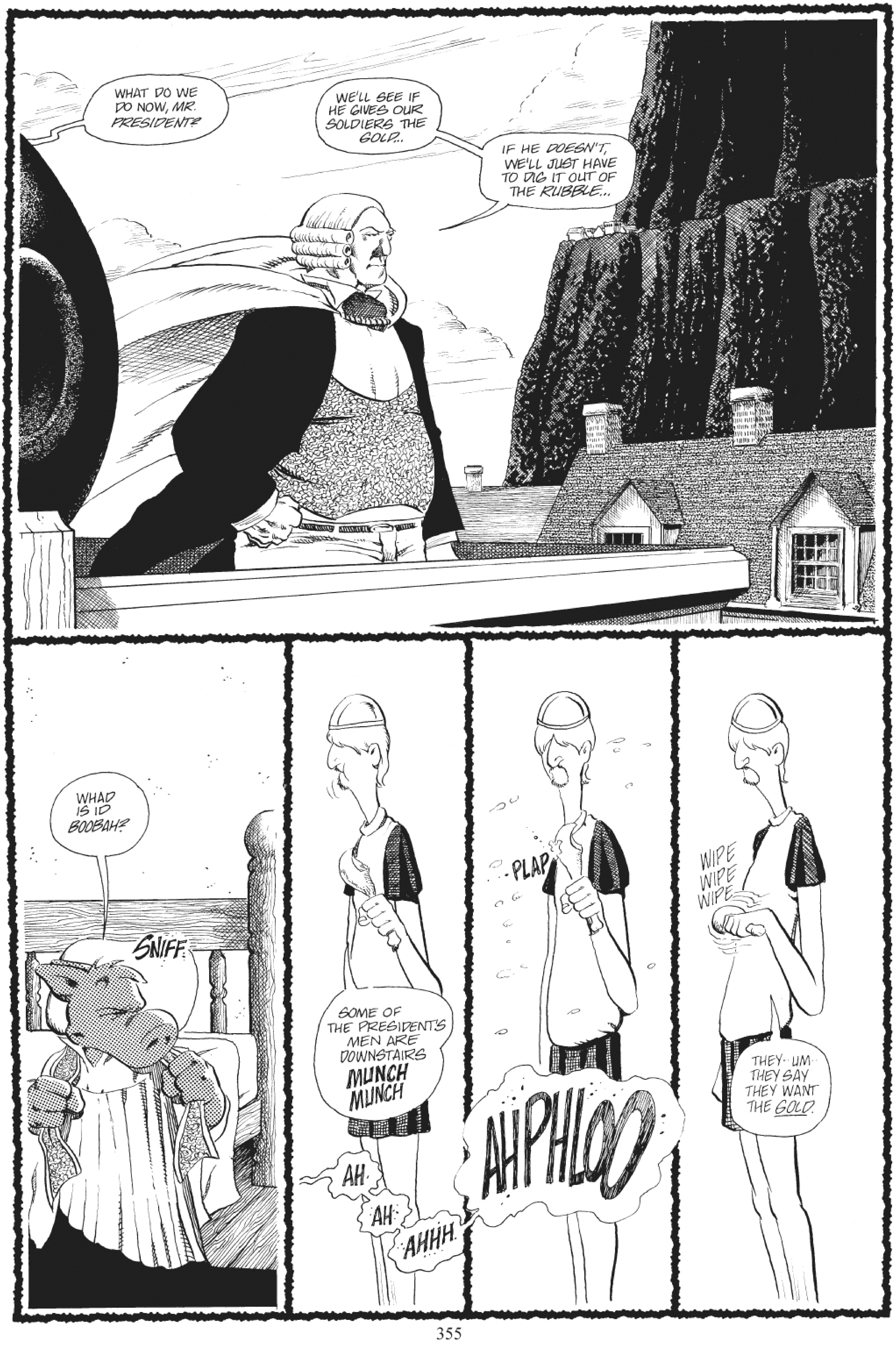

NA GOLT!?
YOU'RE DUTS!
'NUTS' AM I?
LOOK MORE CLOSELY, AARDVARK!
I'M NOT ALONE UP HERE
I HAVE COMPANY!

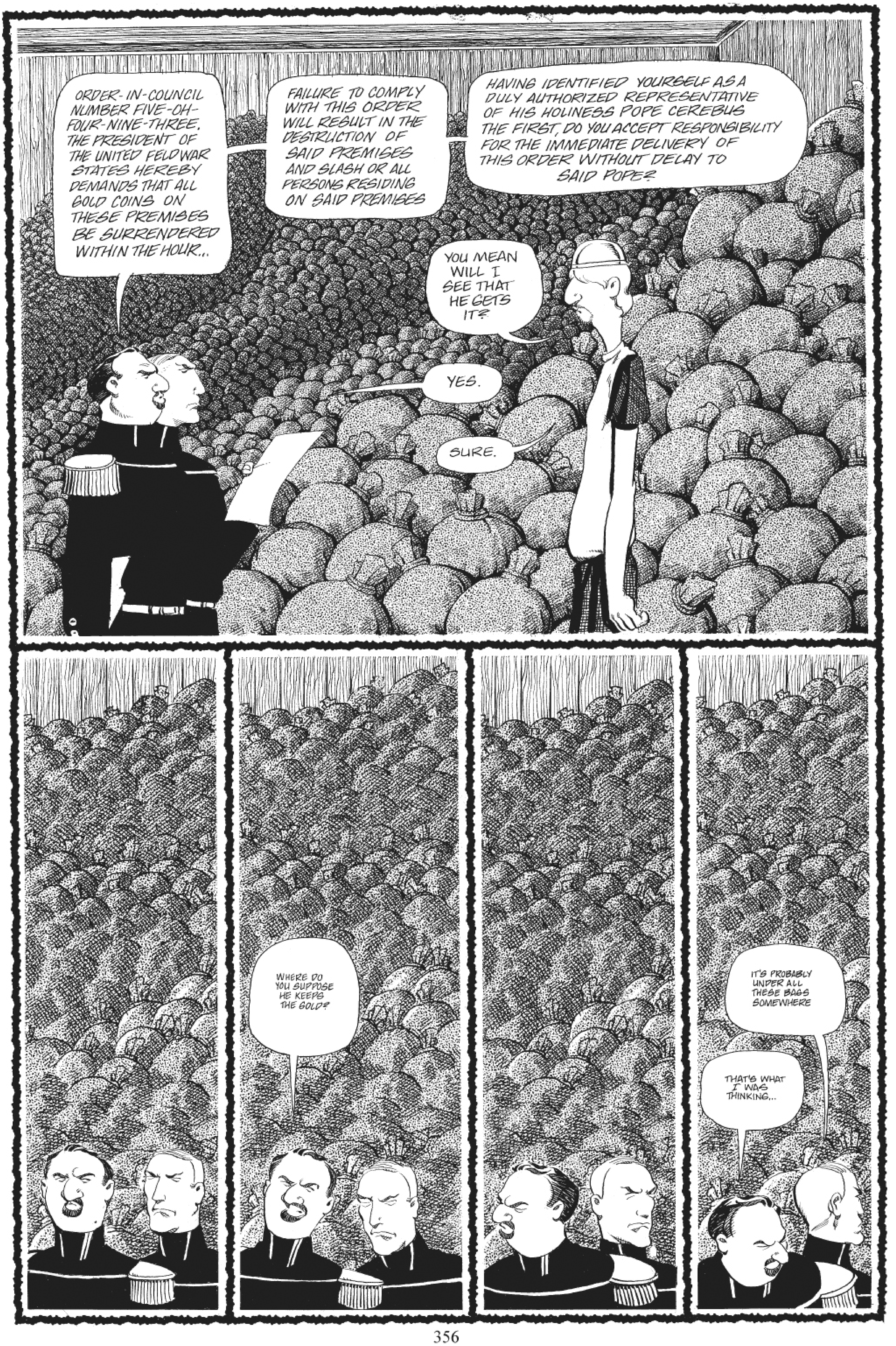

I WANT THE GOLD....
AND I WANT IT NOW!
UH-OH.
IS SOMETHING WRONG, CEREBUS DARLING?
DEXD: na shid hids na fad
SNIFF

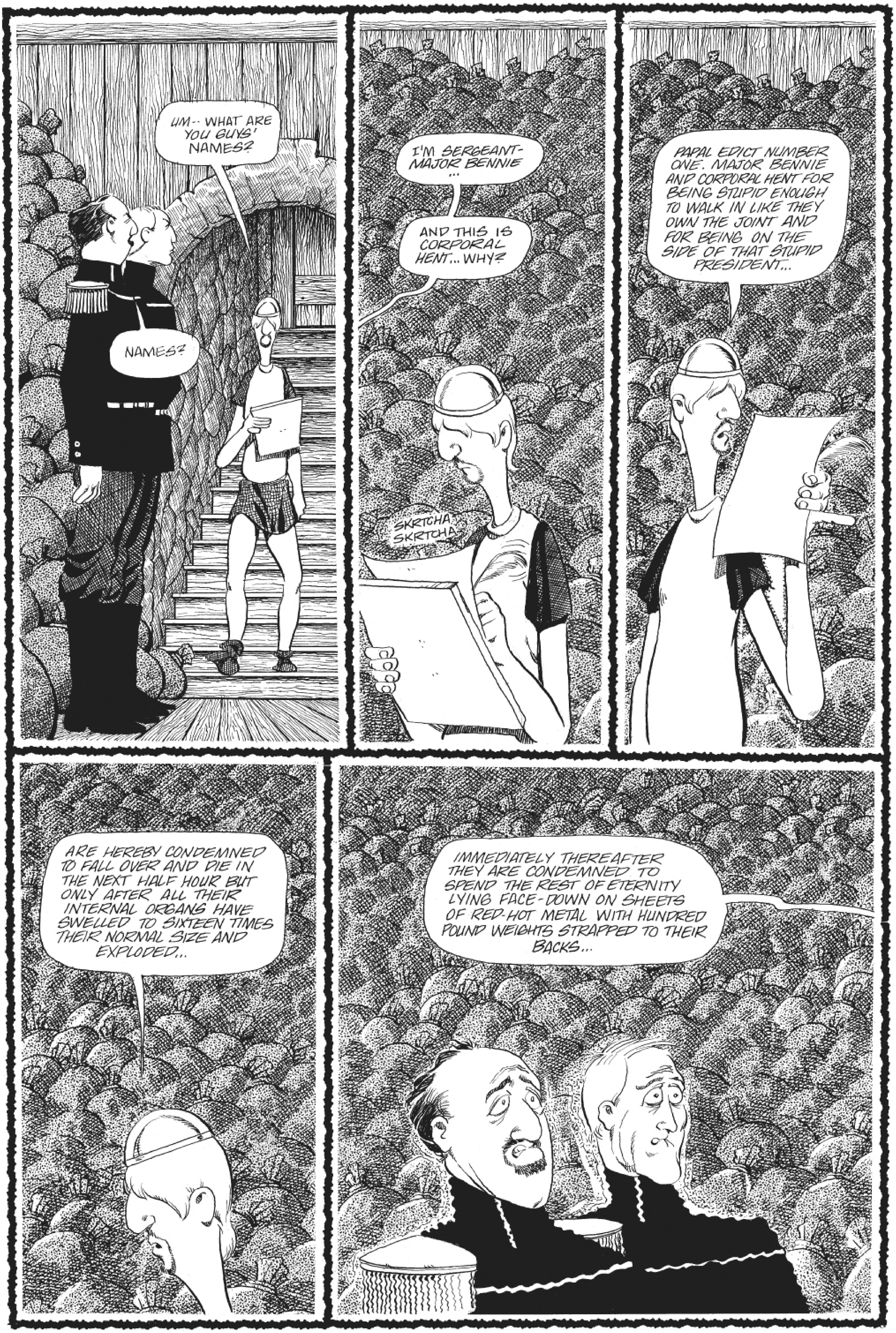

IGNORE IT IT'S JUST ANOTHER REALITY
I WANT AN *ANSWER*, AARDVARK!

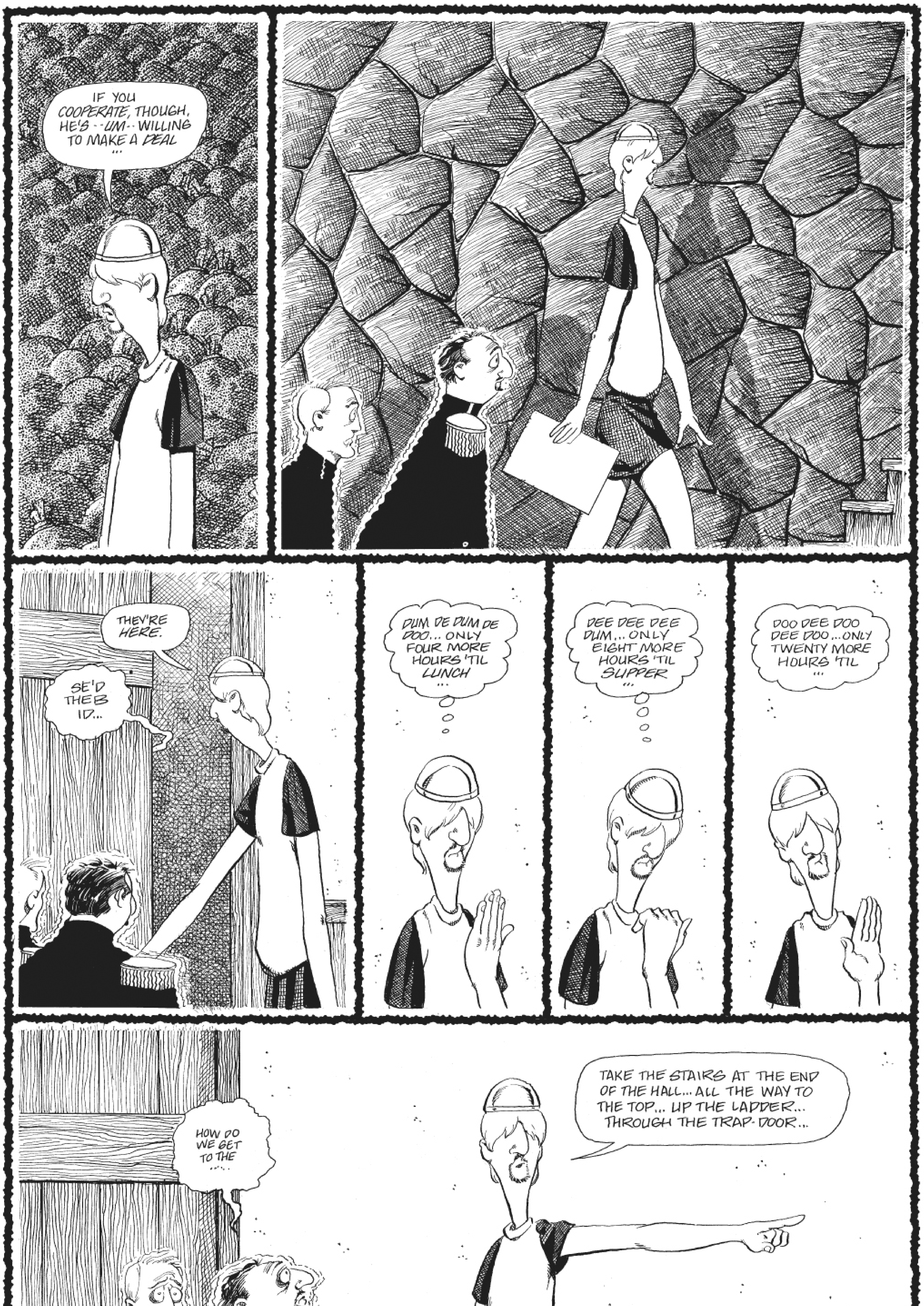

HE WANDS AD ADSER DUD HE?
SNIFF
BOST HOLY WILL GIB HIB AD ADSER...
SNIFF
BOST HOLY WILL DELL HIM DO...
DOOoO-AH

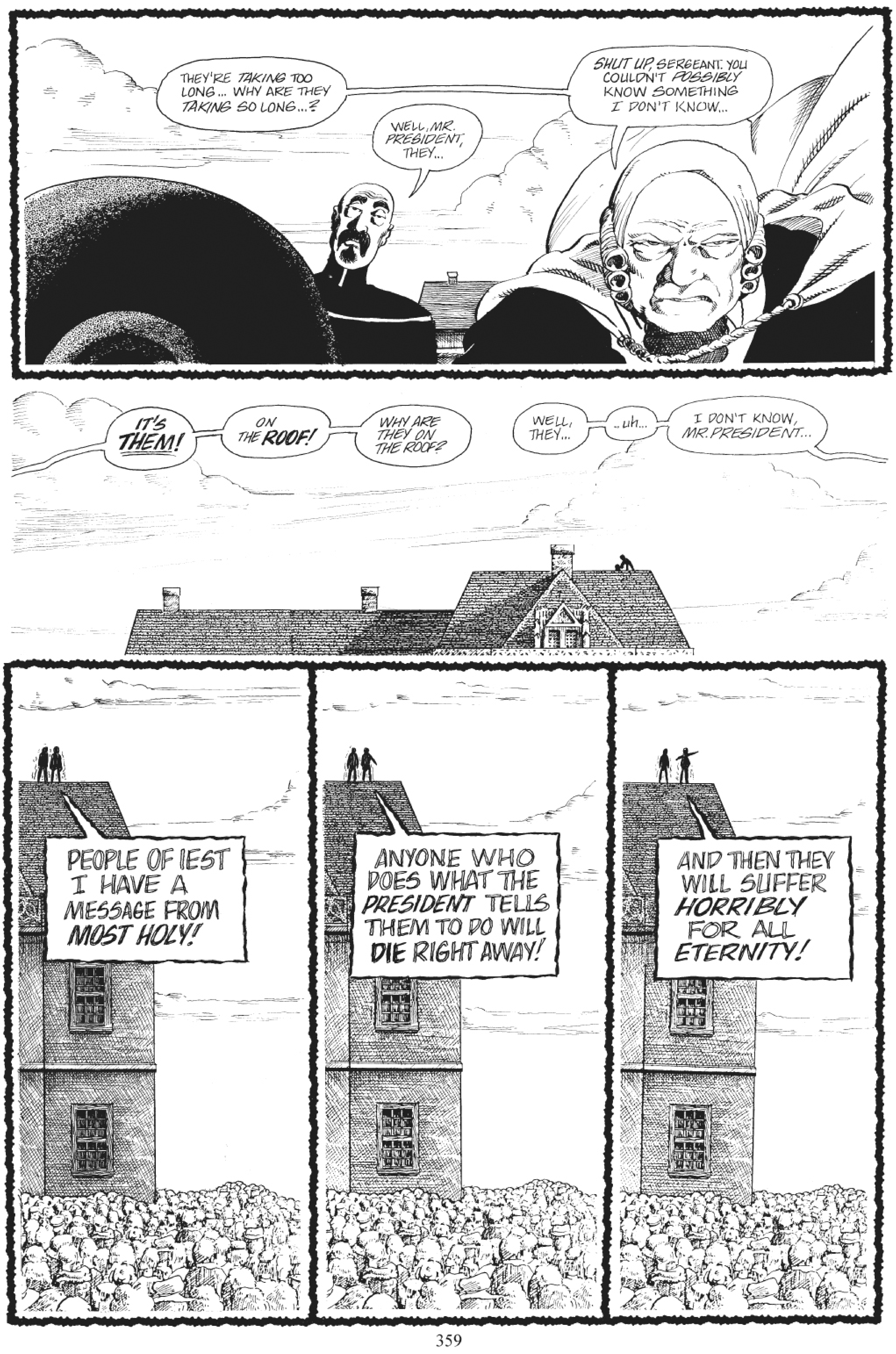

AH
AH
AH
UH-OH...
AHPHLOO!
BOST HOLY ID GOI'G DO DEED HID UDDER ROBES

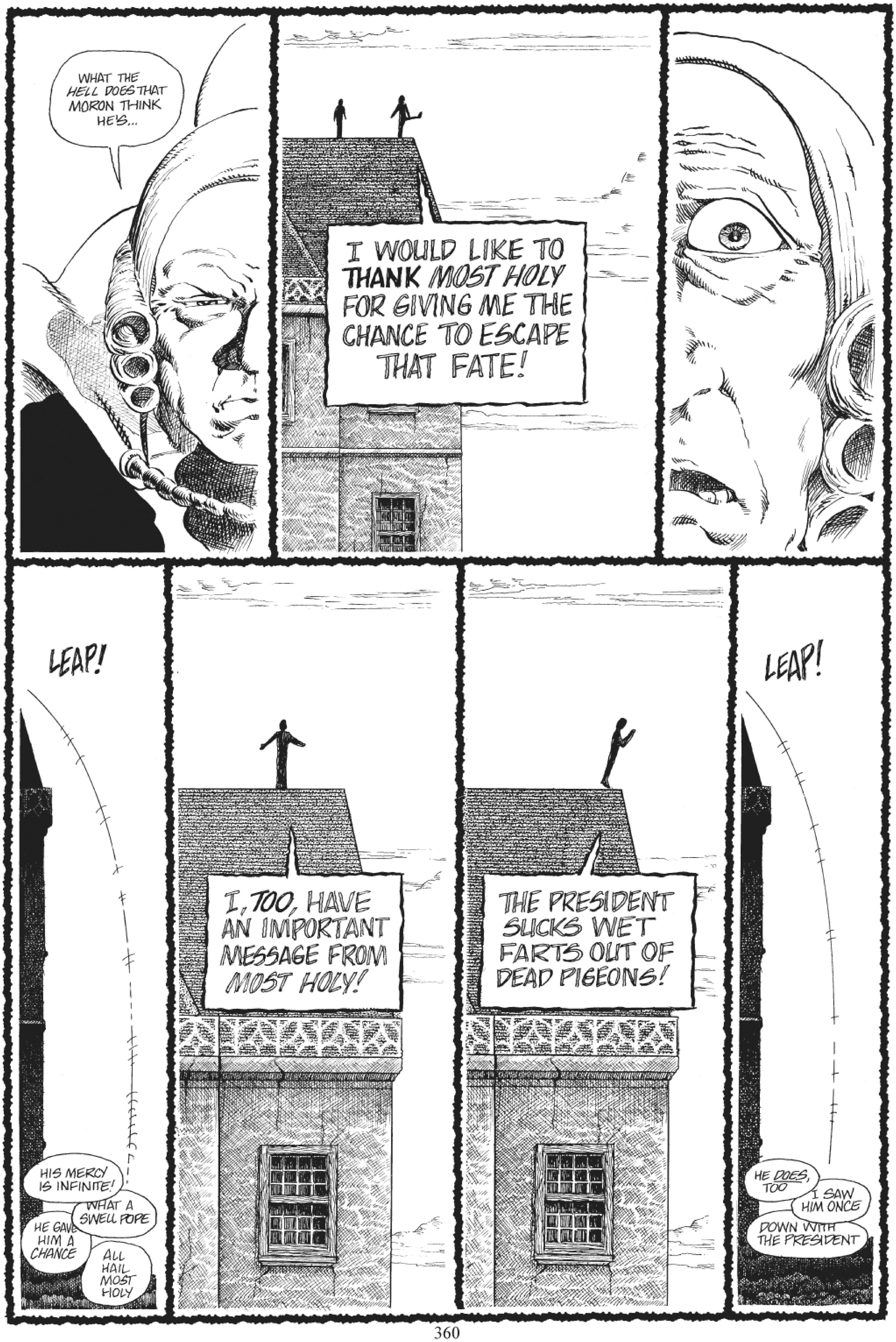

WHAT DO WE DO NOW, MR. PRESIDENT?
WE'LL SEE IF HE GIVES OUR SOLDIERS THE GOLD...
IF HE DOESN'T, WE'LL JUST HAVE TO DIG IT OUT OF THE RUBBLE...
WHAD IS ID BOOBAH?
SNIFF
SOME OF THE PRESIDENT'S MEN ARE DOWNSTAIRS
MUNCH MUNCH
AH
AH
AHHH
PLAP
AHPHLOO
WIPE WIPE WIPE
THEY.. UM.. THEY SAY THEY WANT THE GOLD.

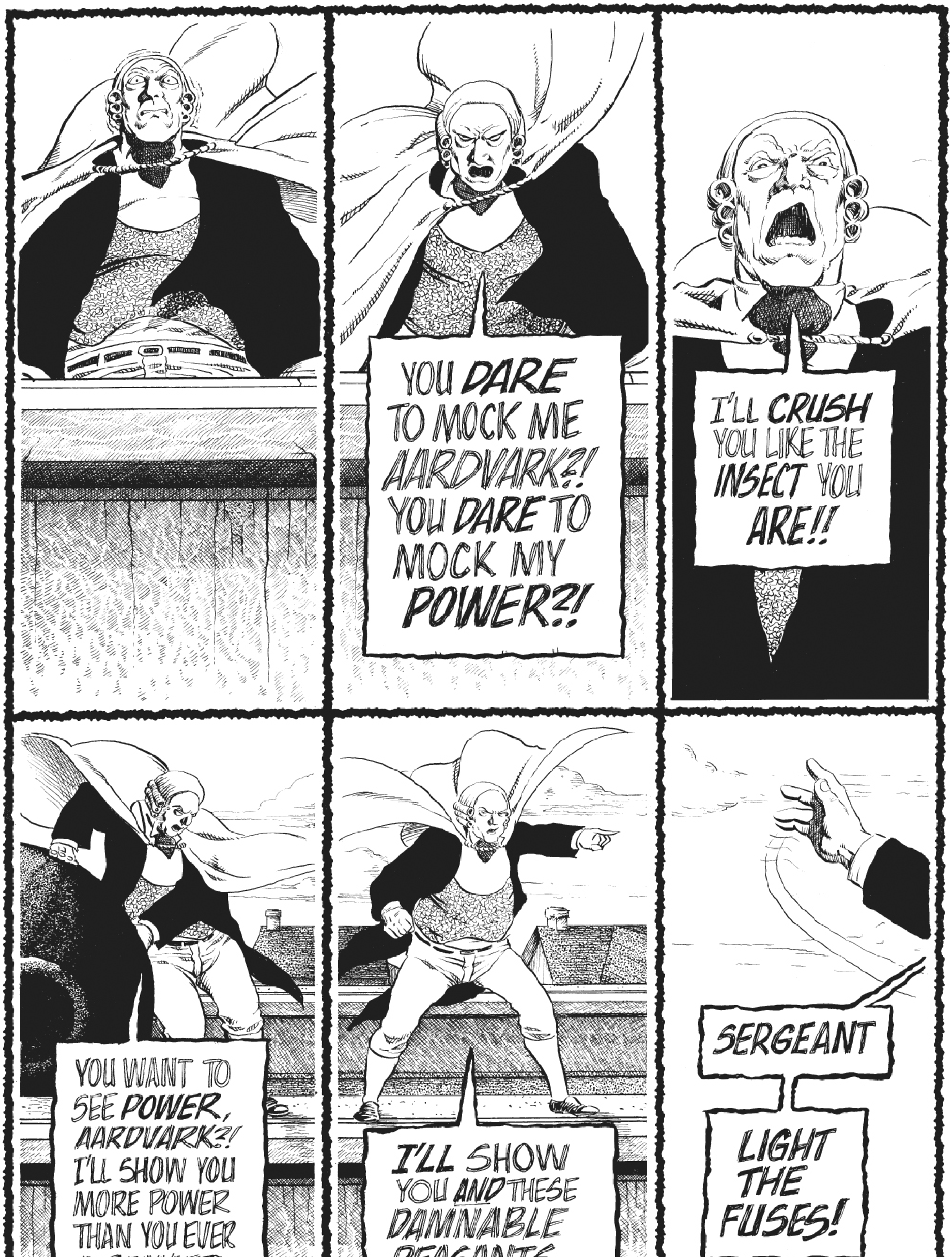

ORDER-IN-COUNCIL NUMBER FIVE-OH-FOUR-NINE-THREE. THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED FELDWAR STATES HEREBY DEMANDS THAT ALL GOLD COINS ON THESE PREMISES BE SURRENDERED WITHIN THE HOUR...
FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THIS ORDER WILL RESULT IN THE DESTRUCTION OF SAID PREMISES AND SLASH OR ALL PERSONS RESIDING ON SAID PREMISES
HAVING IDENTIFIED YOURSELF AS A DULY AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE CEREBUS THE FIRST, DO YOU ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE IMMEDIATE DELIVERY OF THIS ORDER WITHOUT DELAY TO SAID POPE?
YOU MEAN WILL I SEE THAT HE GETS IT?
YES.
SURE.
WHERE DO YOU SUPPOSE HE KEEPS THE GOLD?
IT'S PROBABLY UNDER ALL THESE BAGS SOMEWHERE
THAT'S WHAT I WAS THINKING...

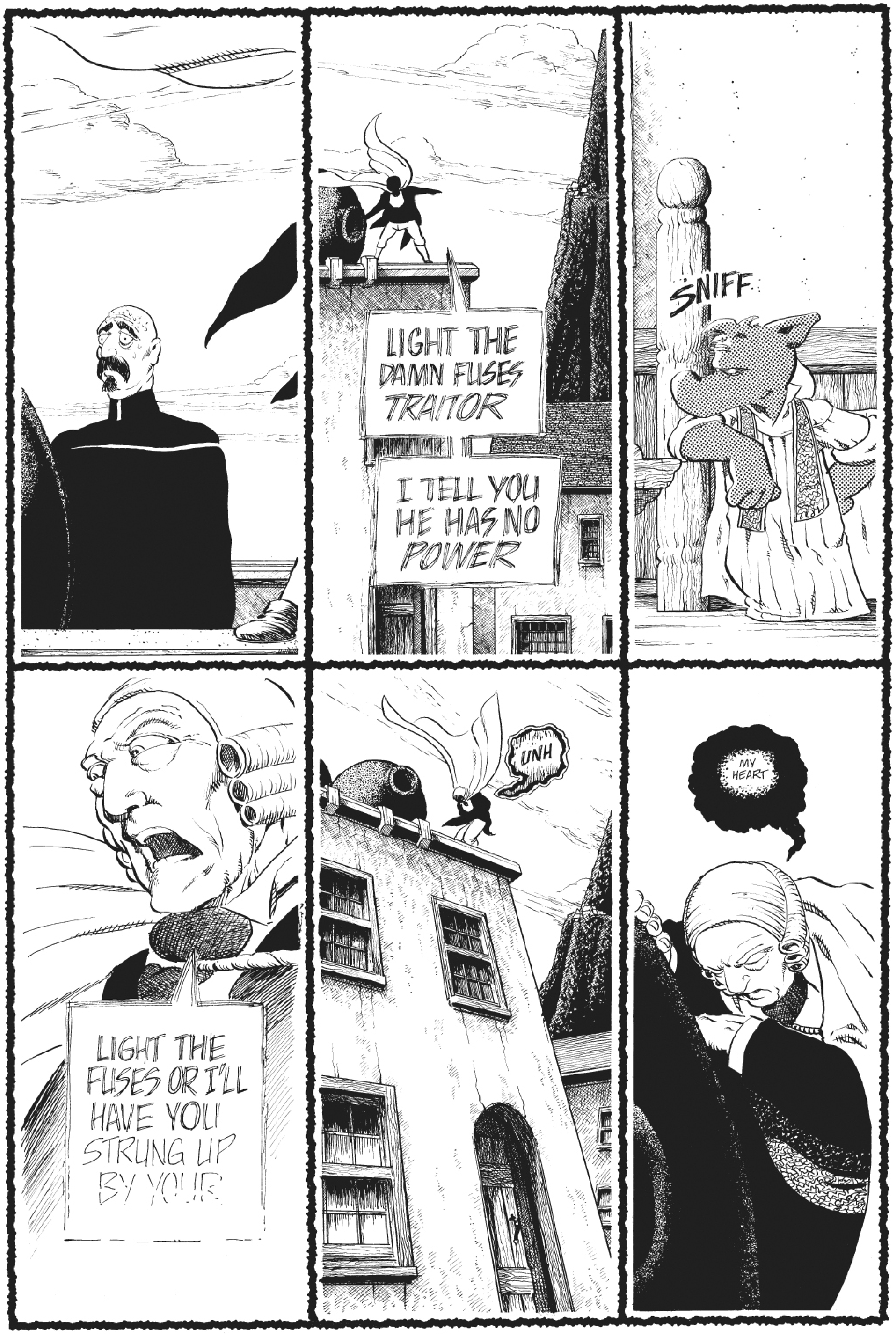

UM-- WHAT ARE YOU GUYS' NAMES?
NAMES?
I'M SERGEANT-MAJOR BENNIE ...
AND THIS IS CORPORAL HENT... WHY?
SKRTCHA SKRTCHA
PAPAL EDICT NUMBER ONE. MAJOR BENNIE AND CORPORAL HENT FOR BEING STUPID ENOUGH TO WALK IN LIKE THEY OWN THE JOINT AND FOR BEING ON THE SIDE OF THAT STUPID PRESIDENT...
ARE HEREBY CONDEMNED TO FALL OVER AND DIE IN THE NEXT HALF HOUR BUT ONLY AFTER ALL THEIR INTERNAL ORGANS HAVE SWELLED TO SIXTEEN TIMES THEIR NORMAL SIZE AND EXPLODED...
IMMEDIATELY THEREAFTER THEY ARE CONDEMNED TO SPEND THE REST OF ETERNITY LYING FACE-DOWN ON SHEETS OF RED-HOT METAL WITH HUNDRED POUND WEIGHTS STRAPPED TO THEIR BACKS...

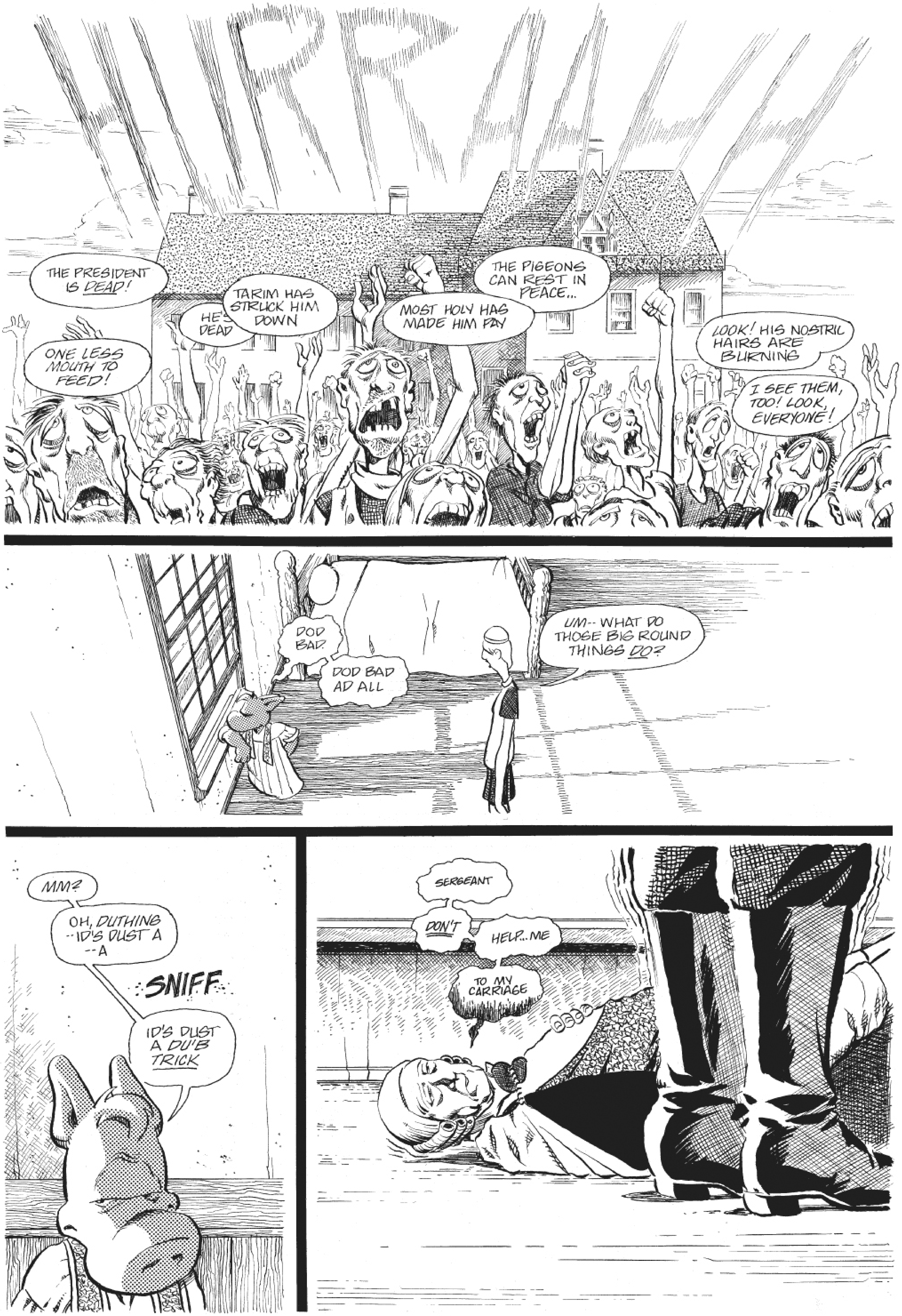

IF YOU COOPERATE, THOUGH, HE'S --UM-- WILLING TO MAKE A DEAL ...
THEY'RE HERE.
SE'D THE B ID...
DUM DE DUM DE DOO... ONLY FOUR MORE HOURS 'TIL LUNCH ...
DEE DEE DEE DUM... ONLY EIGHT MORE HOURS 'TIL SUPPER ...
DOO DEE DOO DEE DOO... ONLY TWENTY MORE HOURS 'TIL ...
HOW DO WE GET TO THE ...
TAKE THE STAIRS AT THE END OF THE HALL... ALL THE WAY TO THE TOP... UP THE LADDER... THROUGH THE TRAP-DOOR...

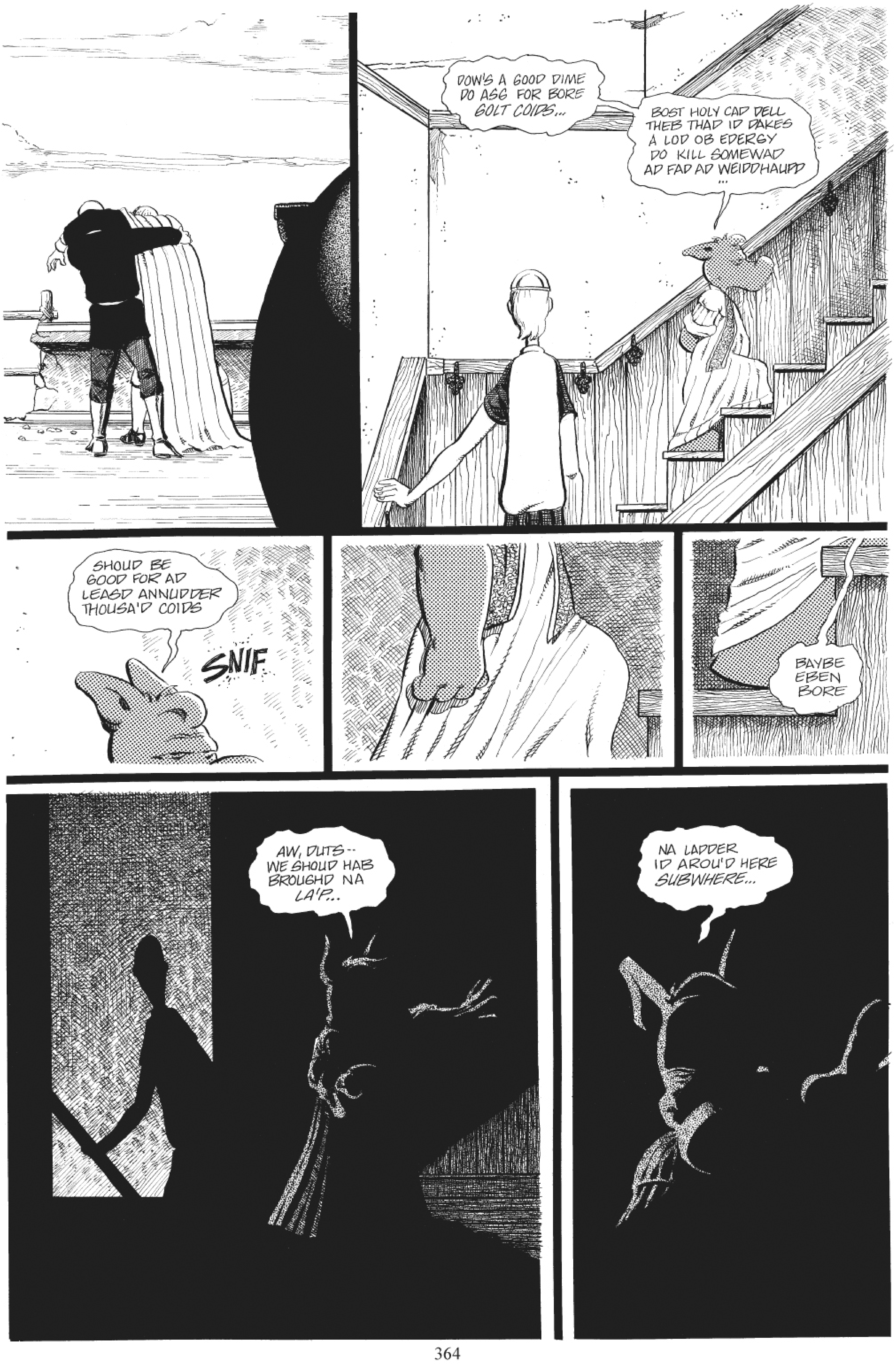

THEY'RE *TAKING* TOO LONG ... WHY ARE THEY *TAKING* SO LONG ...?
WELL, MR. PRESIDENT, THEY...
SHUT UP, SERGEANT. YOU COULDN'T *POSSIBLY* KNOW SOMETHING I DON'T KNOW...
IT'S ***THEM!***
ON THE ***ROOF!***
WHY ARE THEY ON THE ROOF?
WELL, THEY...
..uh...
I DON'T KNOW, *MR. PRESIDENT...*
PEOPLE OF IEST I HAVE A MESSAGE FROM ***MOST HOLY!***
ANYONE WHO DOES WHAT THE ***PRESIDENT*** TELLS THEM TO DO WILL **DIE** RIGHT AWAY!
AND THEN THEY WILL SUFFER ***HORRIBLY*** FOR ALL *ETERNITY!*

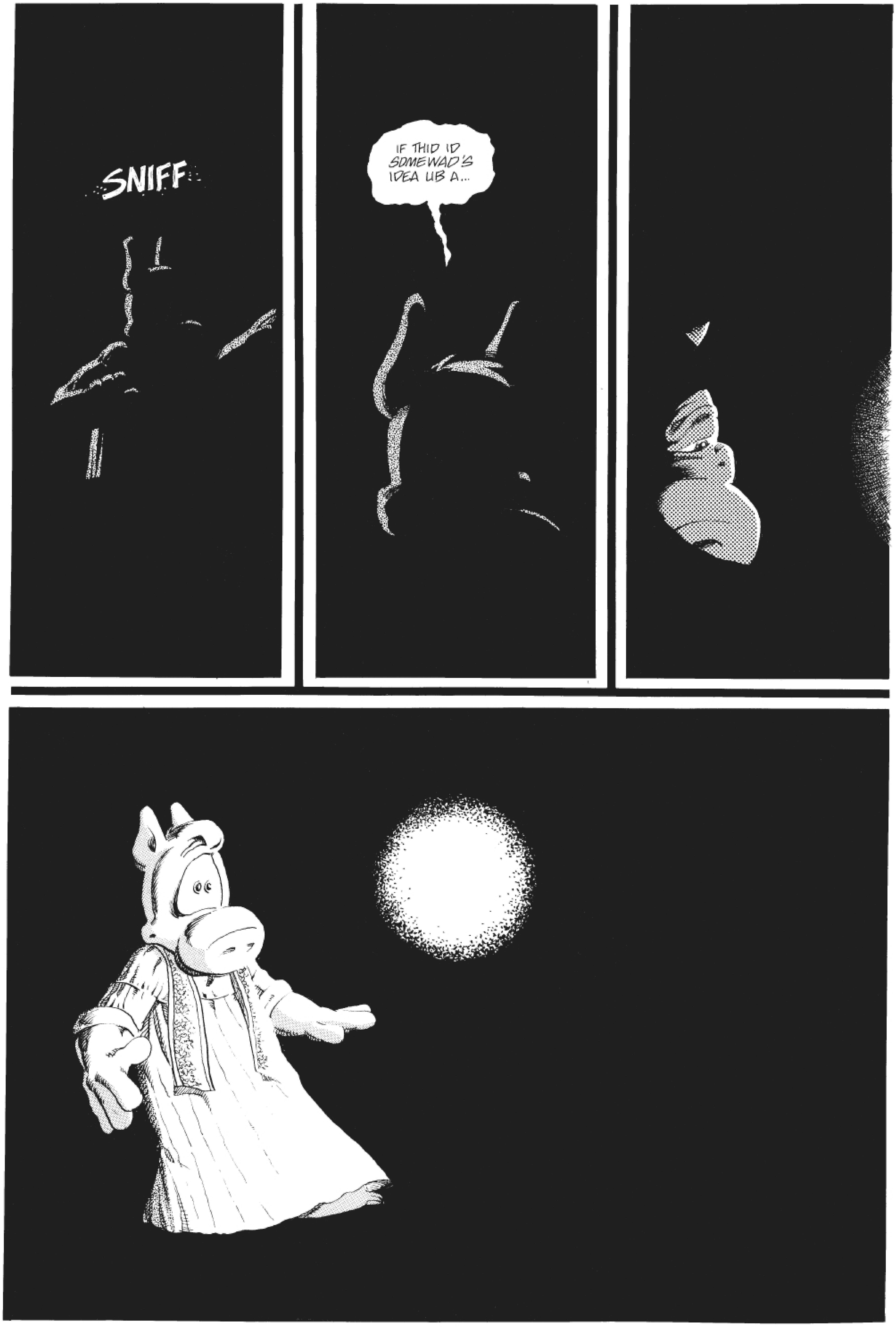

WHAT THE HELL DOES THAT MORON THINK HE'S...
I WOULD LIKE TO THANK MOST HOLY FOR GIVING ME THE CHANCE TO ESCAPE THAT FATE!
LEAP!
HIS MERCY IS INFINITE!
WHAT A SWELL POPE
HE GAVE HIM A CHANCE
ALL HAIL MOST HOLY
I, TOO, HAVE AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM MOST HOLY!
THE PRESIDENT SUCKS WET FARTS OUT OF DEAD PIGEONS!
LEAP!
HE DOES, TOO
I SAW HIM ONCE
DOWN WITH THE PRESIDENT

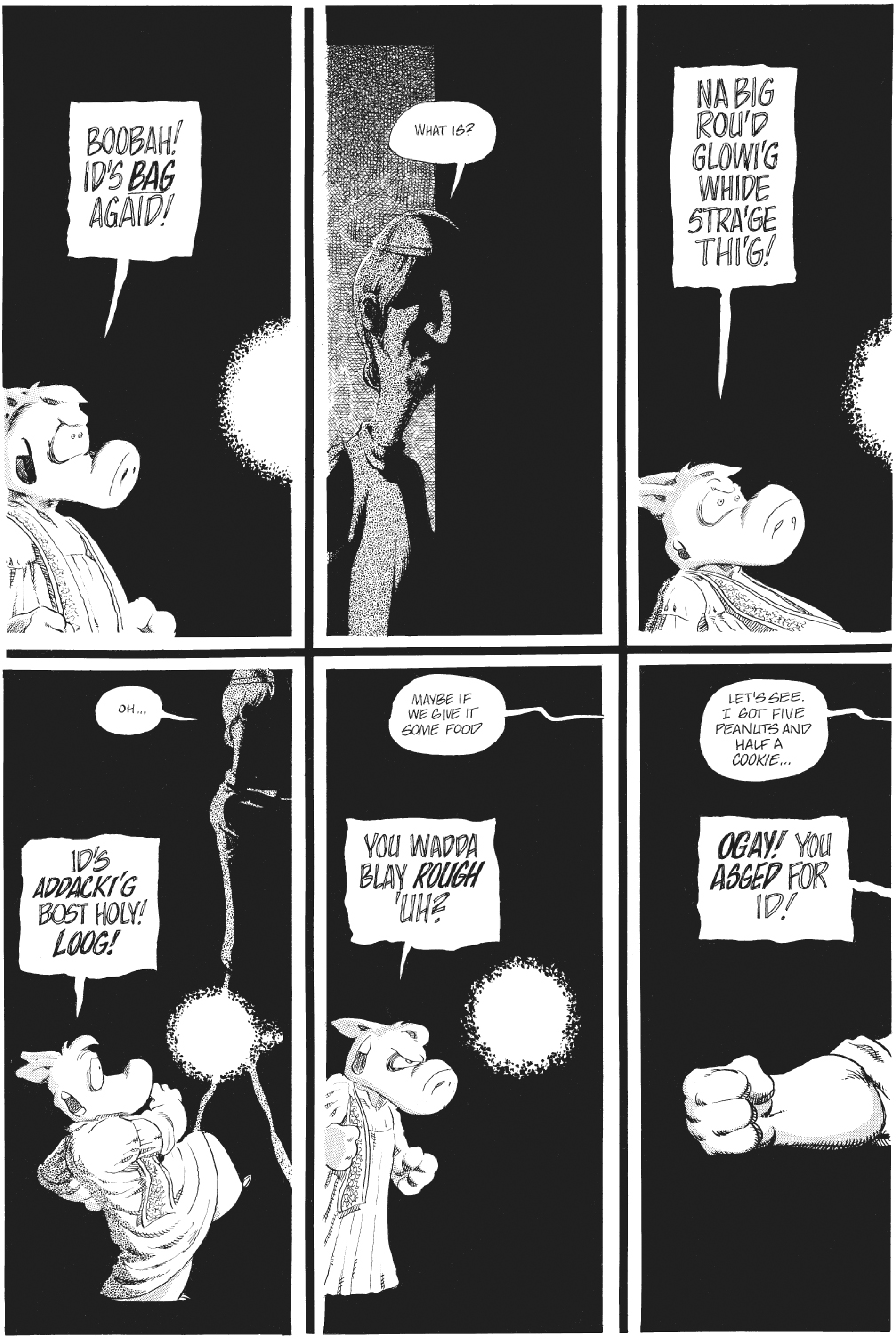

YOU *DARE* TO MOCK ME *AARDVARK?!* YOU *DARE* TO MOCK MY *POWER?!*
I'LL *CRUSH* YOU LIKE THE *INSECT* YOU *ARE!!*
YOU WANT TO SEE *POWER, AARDVARK?!* I'LL SHOW YOU MORE POWER THAN YOU EVER *DREAMED OF!*
I'LL SHOW YOU *AND* THESE *DAMNABLE PEASANTS*
SERGEANT
LIGHT THE FUSES!

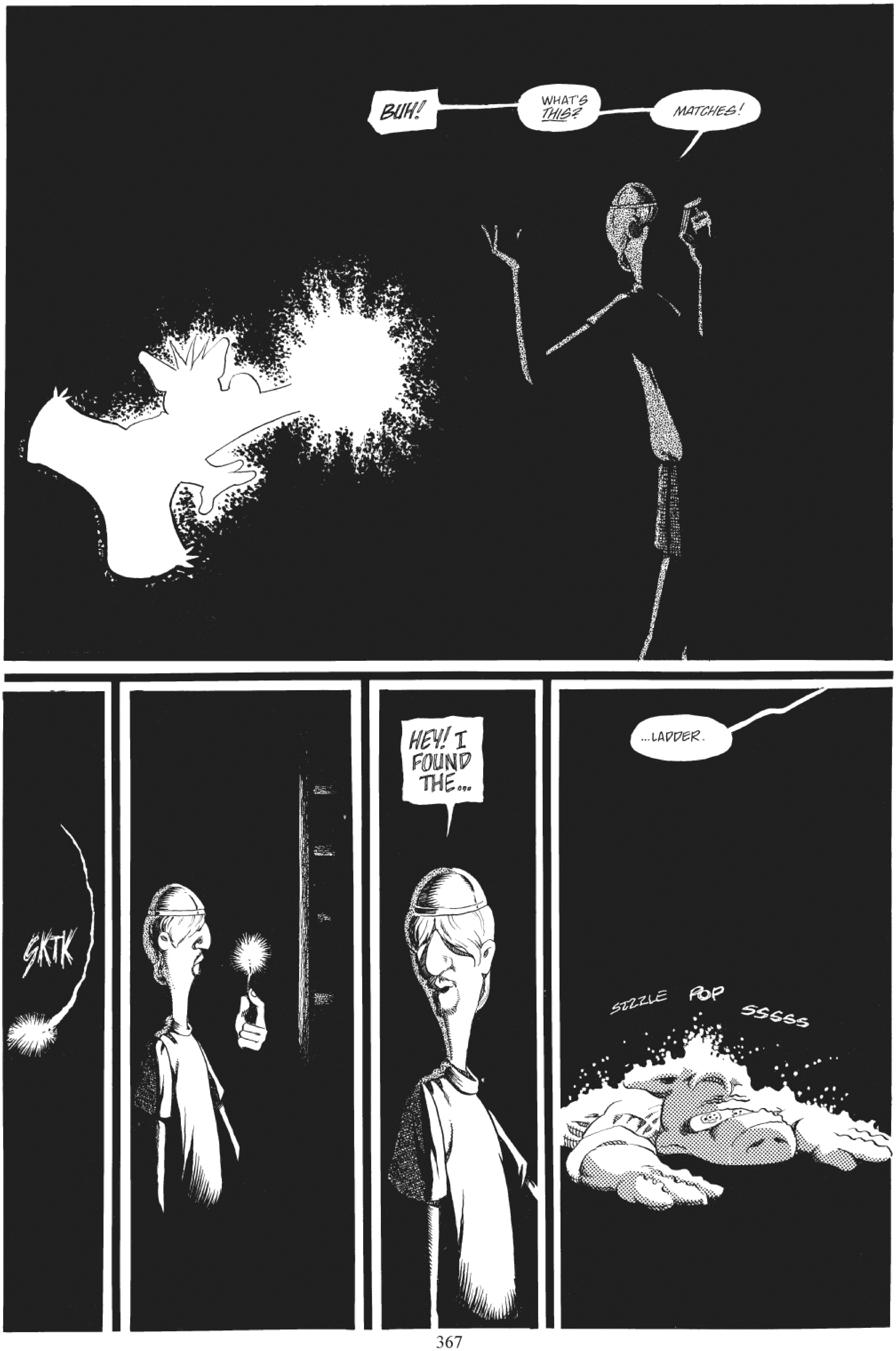

LIGHT THE DAMN FUSES TRAITOR
I TELL YOU HE HAS NO POWER
SNIFF
LIGHT THE FUSES OR I'LL HAVE YOU STRUNG UP BY YOUR
UNH
MY HEART

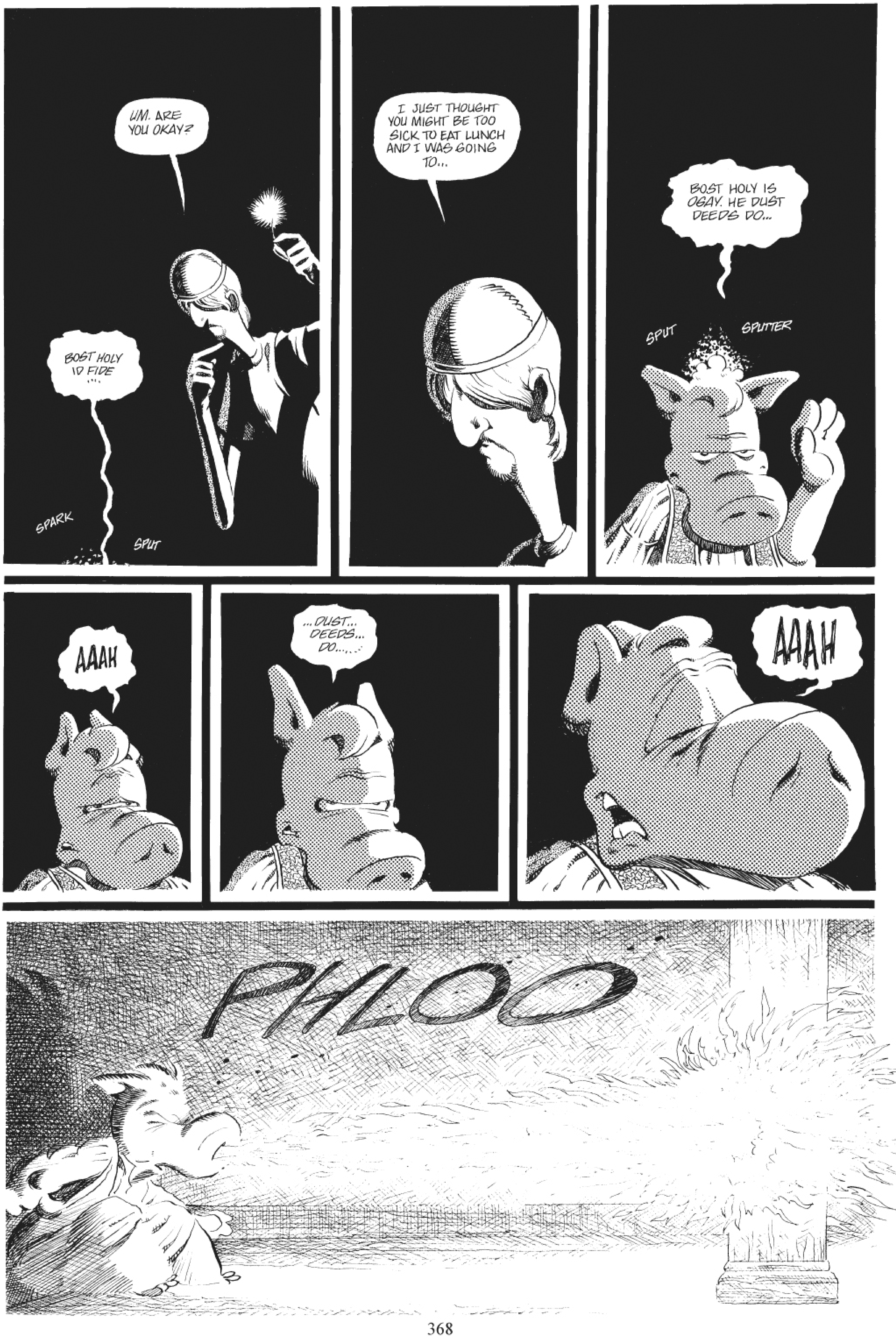

HURRAAAH
THE PRESIDENT IS DEAD!
HE'S DEAD
TARIM HAS STRUCK HIM DOWN
MOST HOLY HAS MADE HIM PAY
THE PIGEONS CAN REST IN PEACE...
ONE LESS MOUTH TO FEED!
LOOK! HIS NOSTRIL HAIRS ARE BURNING
I SEE THEM, TOO! LOOK, EVERYONE!
DOD BAD.
DOD BAD AD ALL
UM-- WHAT DO THOSE BIG ROUND THINGS DO?
MM?
OH, DUTHING --ID'S DUST A --A
SNIFF
ID'S DUST A DU'B TRICK
SERGEANT
DON'T
HELP... ME
TO MY CARRIAGE

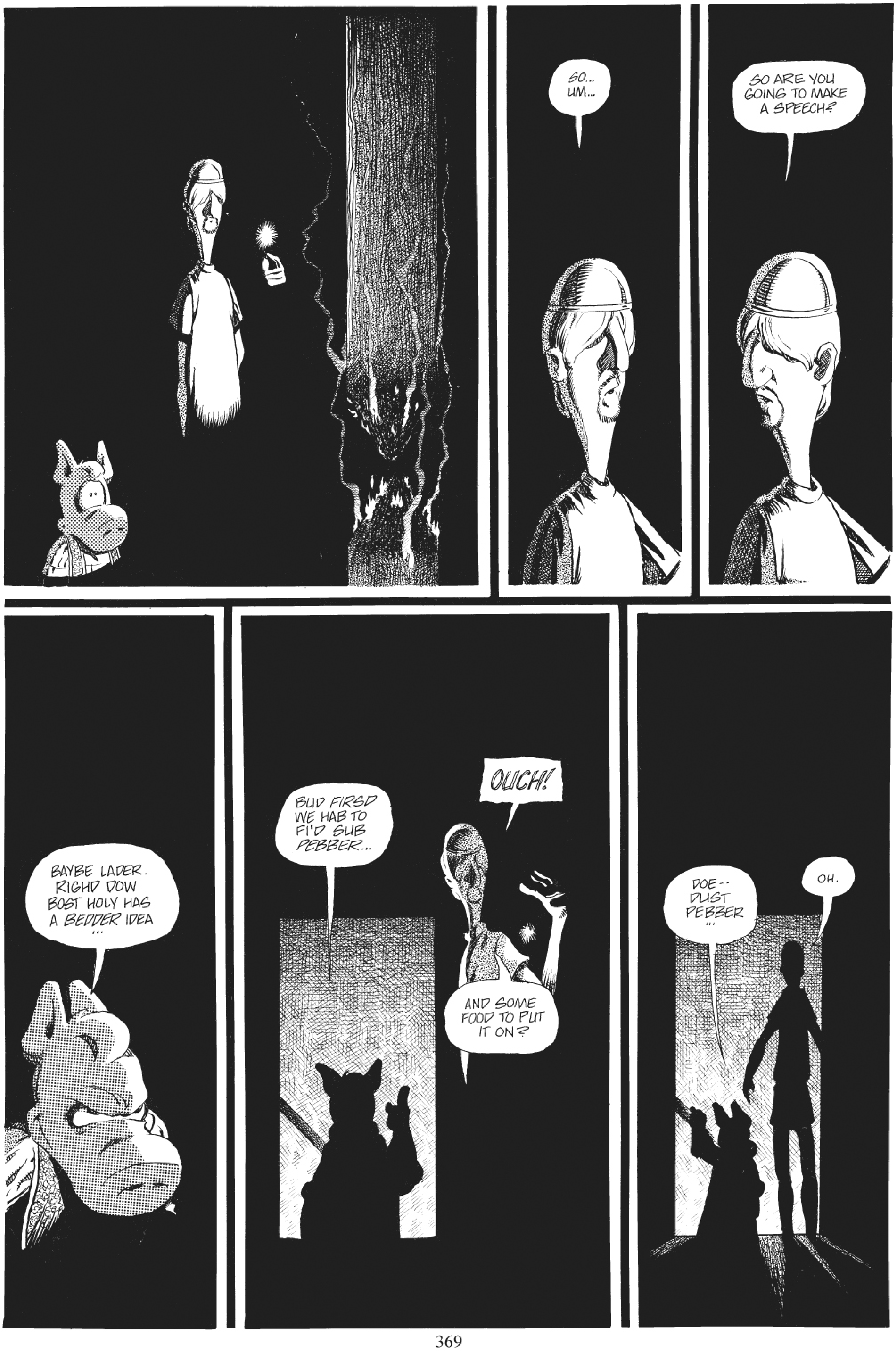

DOW'S A GOOD DIME DO ASG FOR BORE GOLT COIDS...
BOST HOLY CAD DELL THEB THAD ID DAKES A LOD OB EDERGY DO KILL SOMEWAD AD FAD AD WEIDDHAUPD ...
SHOUD BE GOOD FOR AD LEASD ANNUDDER THOUSA'D COIDS
SNIF
BAYBE EBEN BORE
AW, DUTS-- WE SHOUD HAB BROUGHD NA LA'P...
NA LADDER ID AROU'D HERE SUBWHERE...

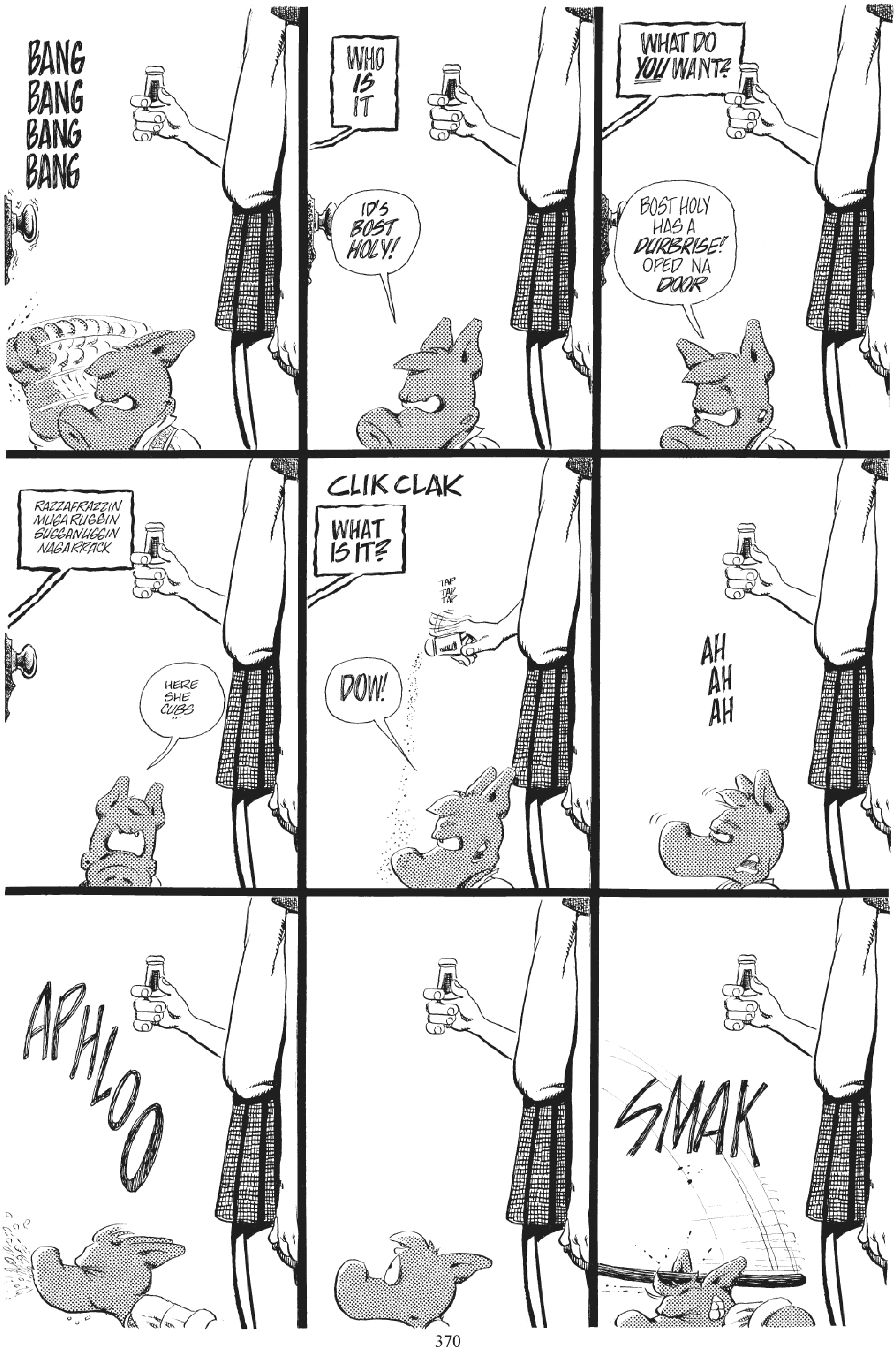

SNIFF
IF THID ID SOMEWAD'S IDEA UB A...

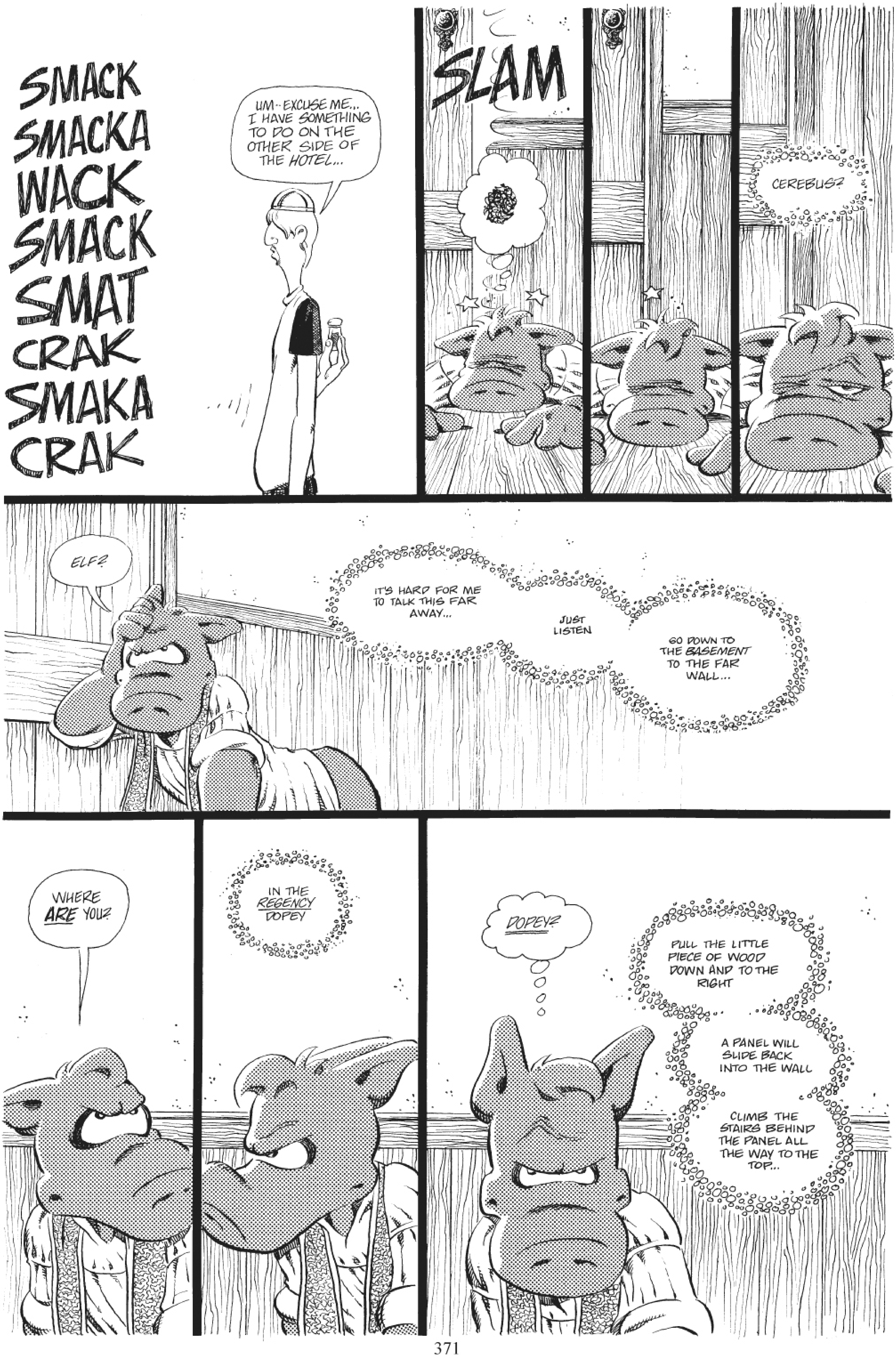

BOOBAH! ID'S BAG AGAID!
WHAT IS?
NA BIG ROU'D GLOWI'G WHIDE STRA'GE THI'G!
OH...
ID'S ADDACKI'G BOST HOLY! LOOG!
MAYBE IF WE GIVE IT SOME FOOD
YOU WADDA BLAY ROUGH 'UH?
LET'S SEE. I GOT FIVE PEANUTS AND HALF A COOKIE...
OGAY! YOU ASGED FOR ID!

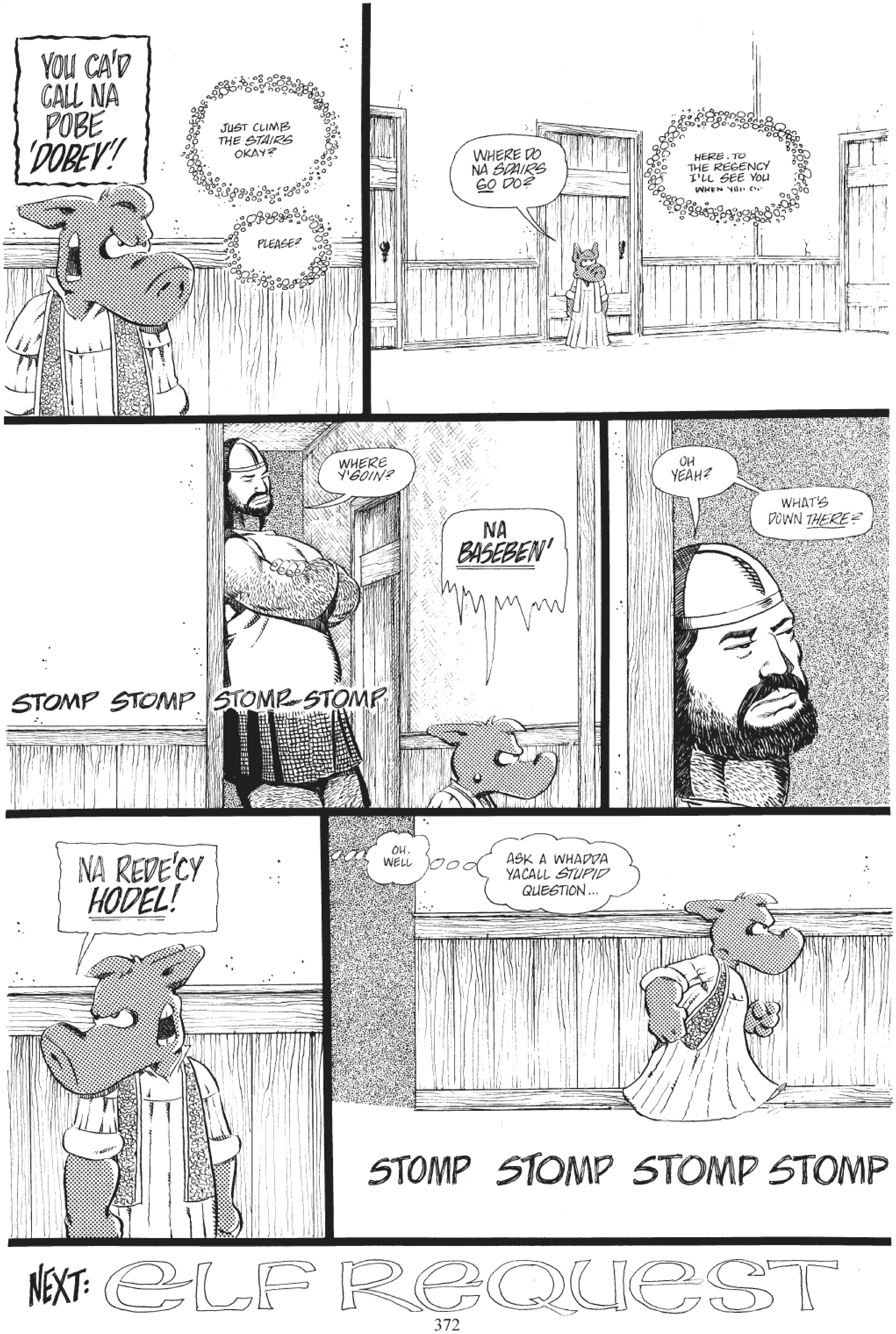

BUH!
WHAT'S THIS?
MATCHES!
SKTK
HEY! I FOUND THE...
...LADDER.
SIZZLE POP SSSSS


UM. ARE YOU OKAY?
BOST HOLY ID FIDE ....
SPARK
SPUT
I JUST THOUGHT YOU MIGHT BE TOO SICK TO EAT LUNCH AND I WAS GOING TO...
BOST HOLY IS OGAY. HE DUST DEEDS DO...
SPUT
SPUTTER
AAAH
...DUST... DEEDS... DO...
AAAH
PHLOO

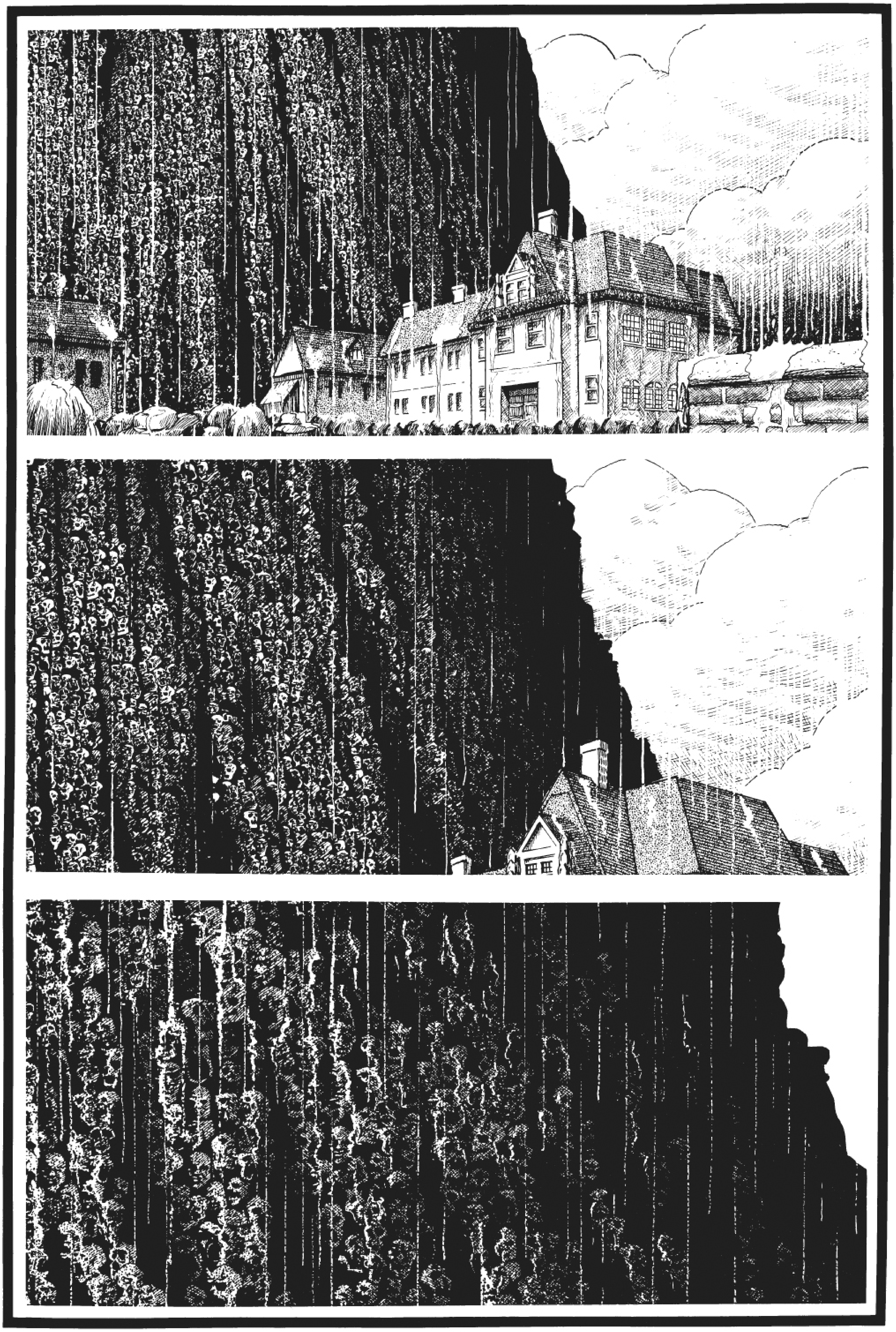

SO... UM...
SO ARE YOU GOING TO MAKE A SPEECH?
BAYBE LADER. RIGHD DOW BOST HOLY HAS A *BEDDER* IDEA ...
BUD FIRSD WE HAB TO FI'D SUB PEBBER...
OUCH!
AND SOME FOOD TO PUT IT ON?
DOE-- DUST PEBBER ...
OH.

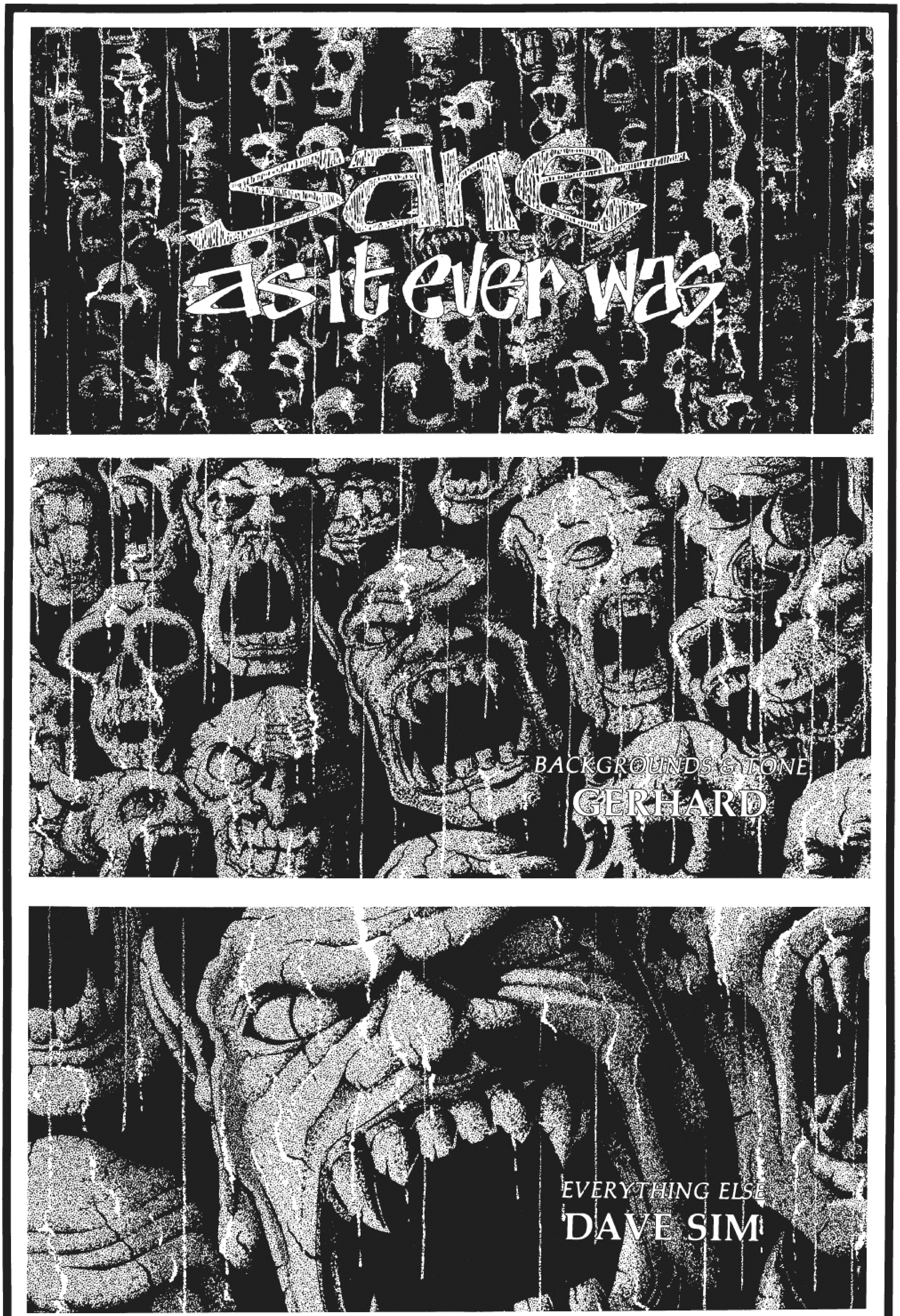

BANG
BANG
BANG
BANG
WHO IS IT
ID'S BOST HOLY!
WHAT DO YOU WANT?
BOST HOLY HAS A DURBRISE! OPED NA DOOR
RAZZAFRAZZIN MUGARUGGIN SUGGANUGGIN NAGARRACK
HERE SHE CUBS...
CLIK CLAK
WHAT IS IT?
TAP TAP TAP
DOW!
AH
AH
AH
APHLOO
SMAK

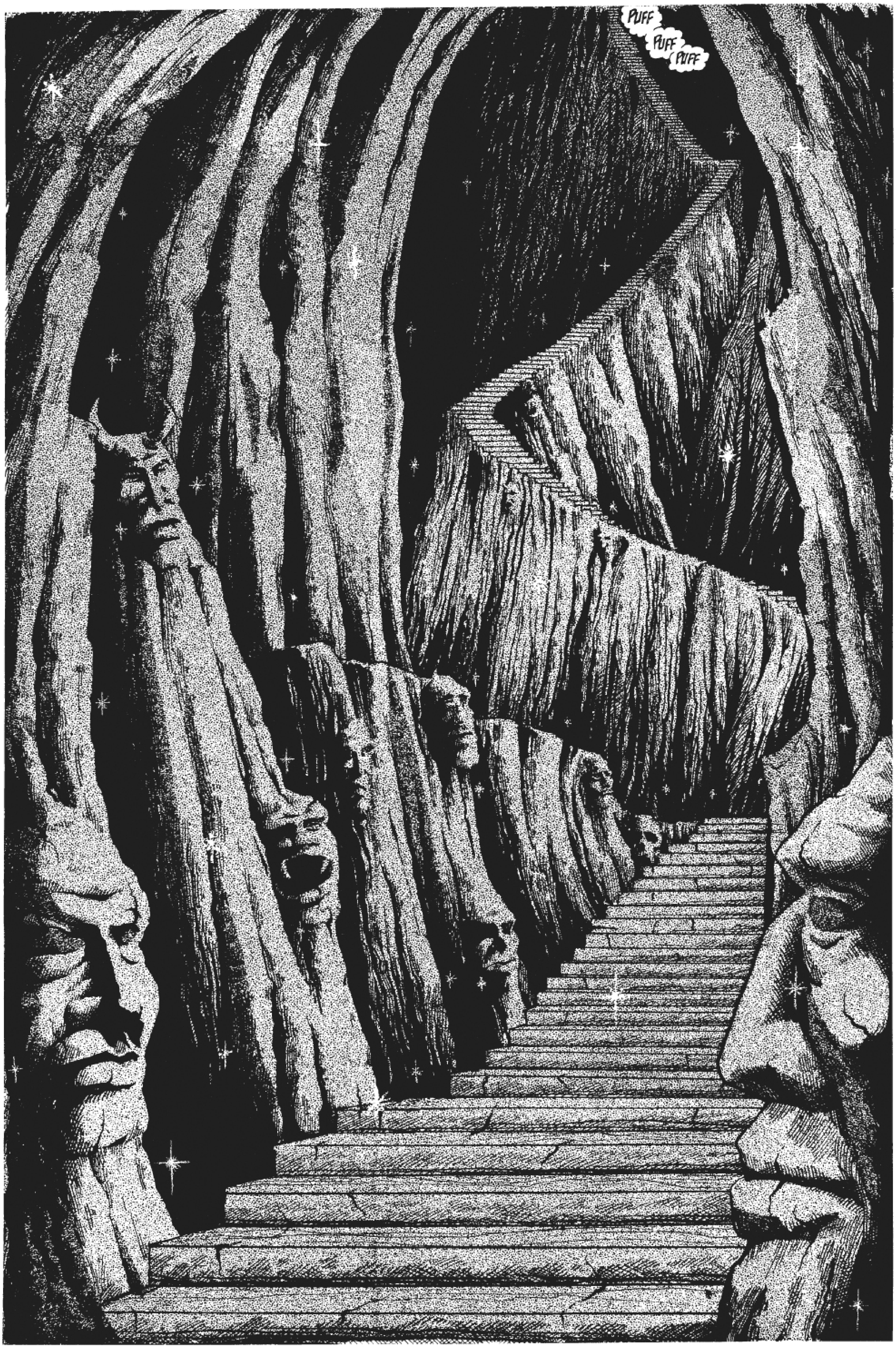

SMACK
SMACKA
WACK
SMACK
SMAT
CRAK
SMAKA
CRAK
UM.. EXCUSE ME... I HAVE SOMETHING TO DO ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE *HOTEL*...
SLAM
CEREBUS?
ELF?
IT'S HARD FOR ME TO TALK THIS FAR AWAY...
JUST LISTEN
GO DOWN TO THE *BASEMENT* TO THE FAR WALL...
WHERE ***ARE*** YOU?
IN THE *REGENCY* DOPEY
DOPEY?
PULL THE LITTLE PIECE OF WOOD DOWN AND TO THE RIGHT
A PANEL WILL SLIDE BACK INTO THE WALL
CLIMB THE STAIRS BEHIND THE PANEL ALL THE WAY TO THE TOP...

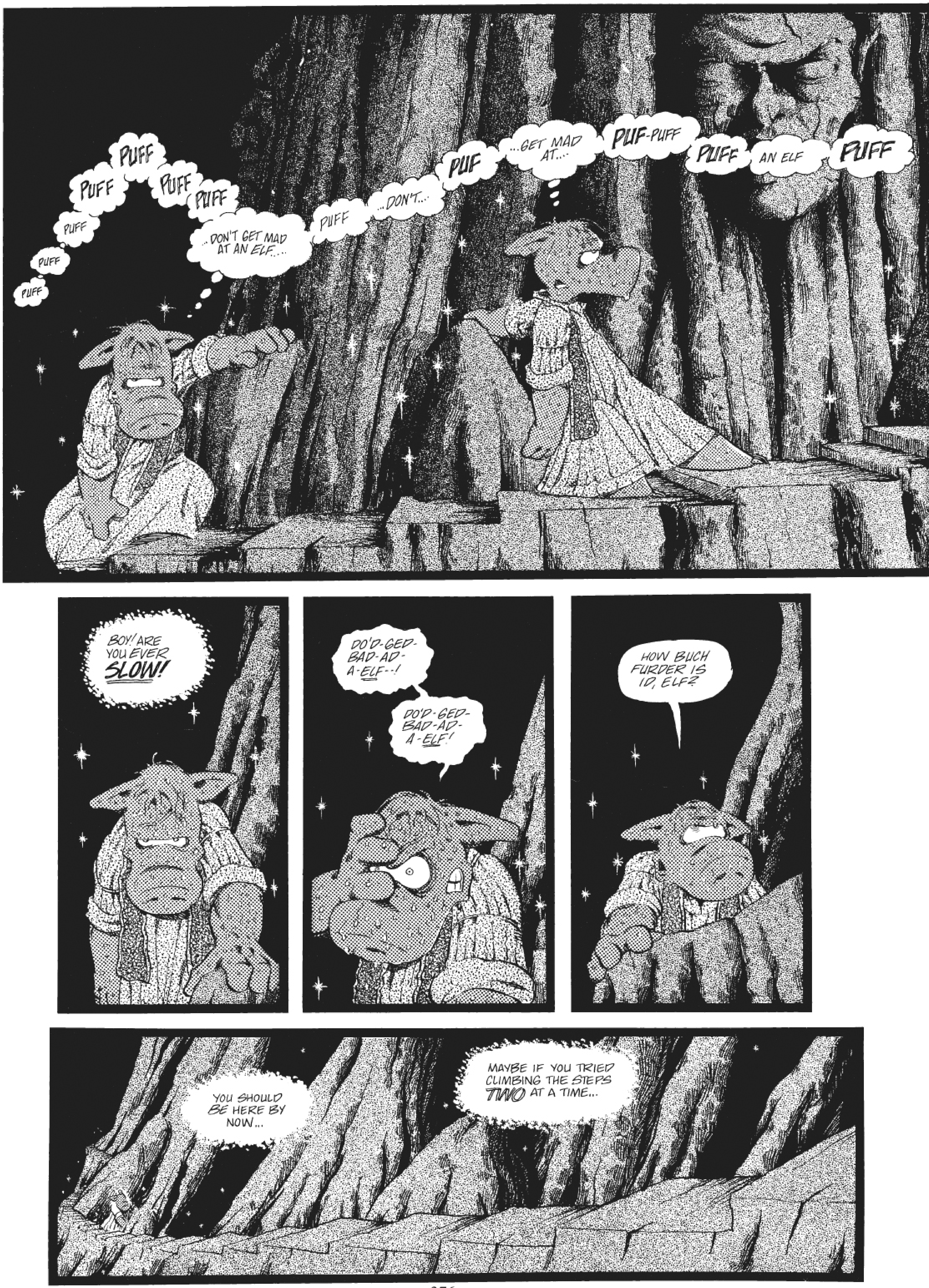

YOU CA'D CALL NA POBE 'DOBEY'!
JUST CLIMB THE STAIRS OKAY?
PLEASE?
WHERE DO NA SDAIRS GO DO?
HERE. TO THE REGENCY I'LL SEE YOU WHEN YOU
STOMP STOMP STOMP STOMP
WHERE Y'GOIN?
NA BASEBEN'
OH YEAH?
WHAT'S DOWN THERE?
NA REDE'CY HODEL!
OH, WELL
ASK A WHADDA YACALL STUPID QUESTION...
STOMP STOMP STOMP STOMP

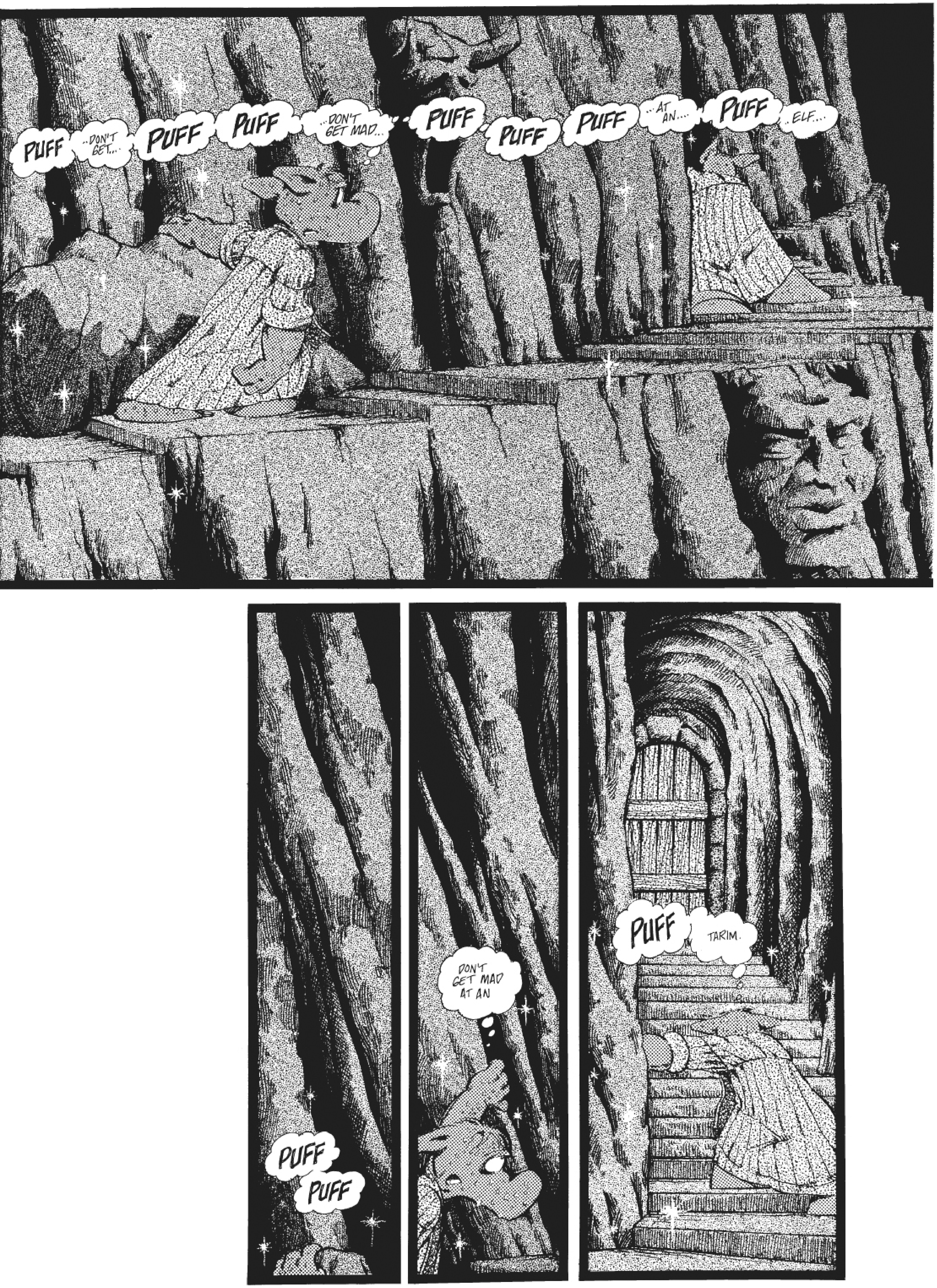
NEXT: ELF REQUEST

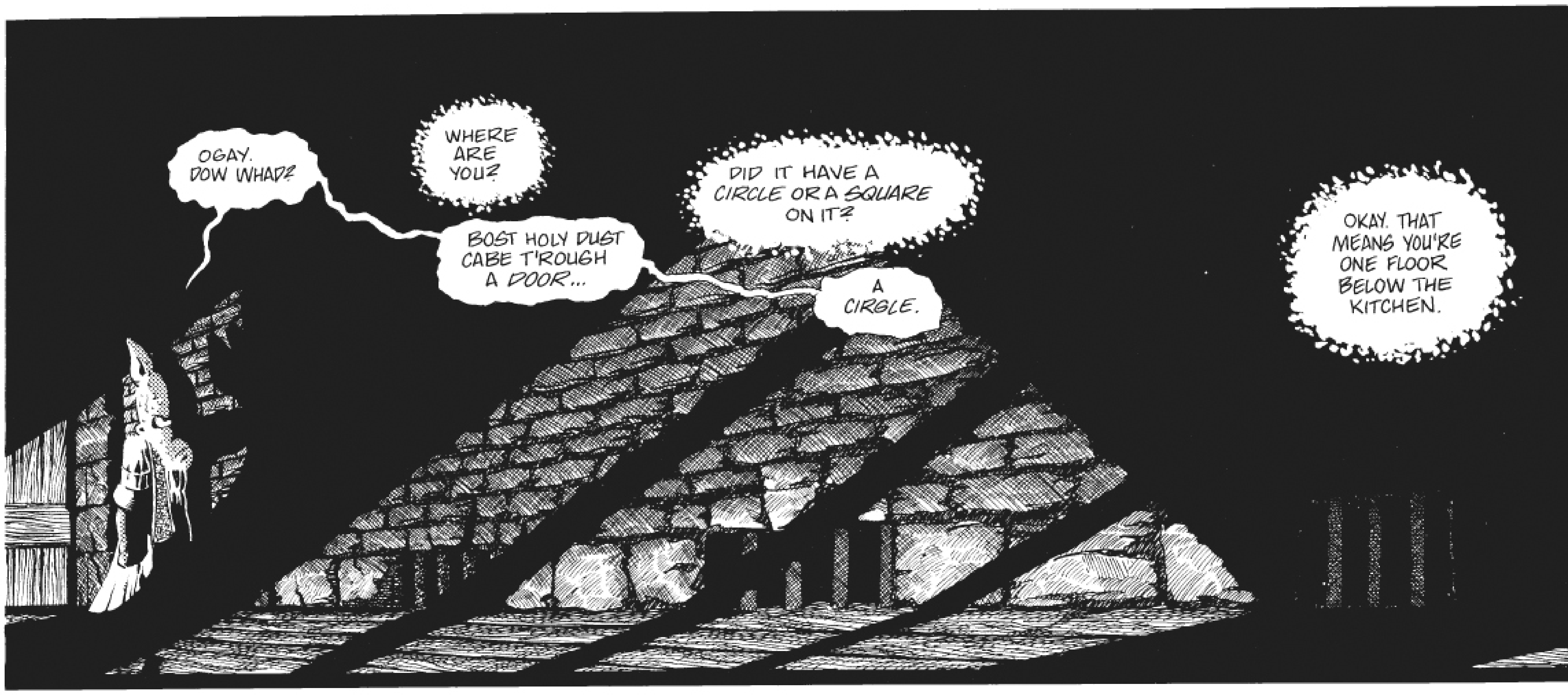


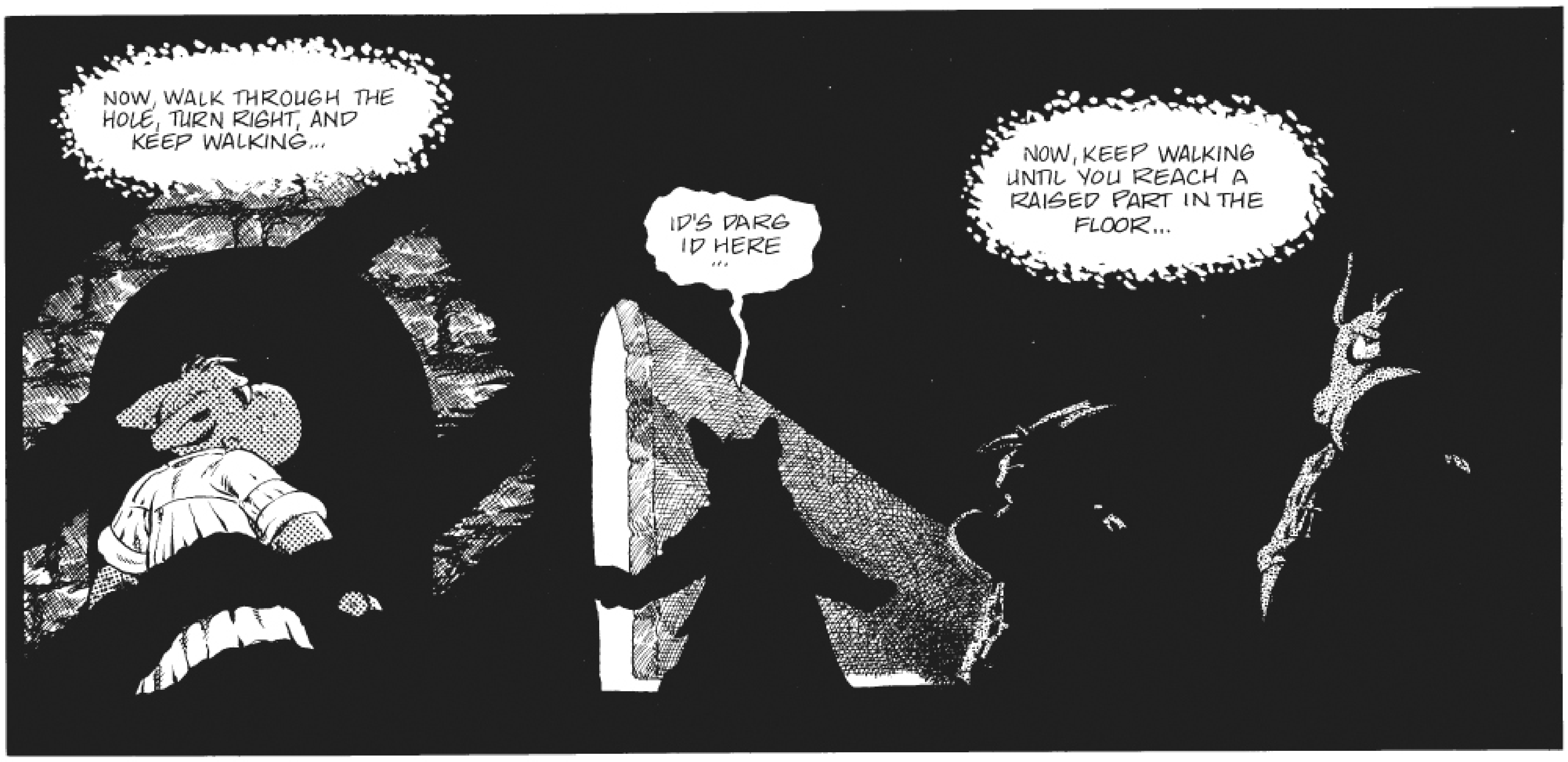

Sane as it ever was
BACKGROUNDS & TONE
GERHARD
EVERYTHING ELSE
DAVE SIM

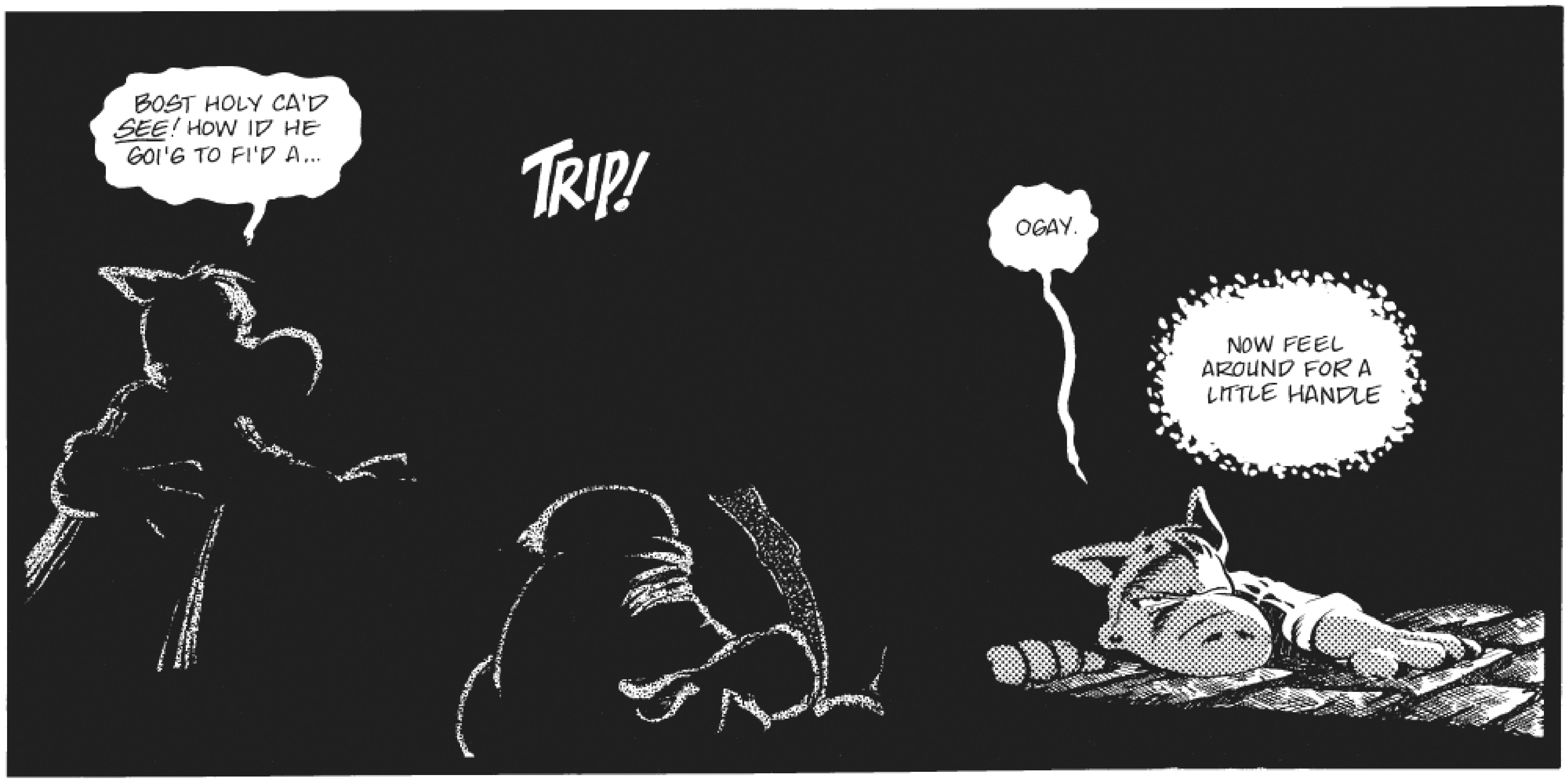

PUFF
PUFF
PUFF

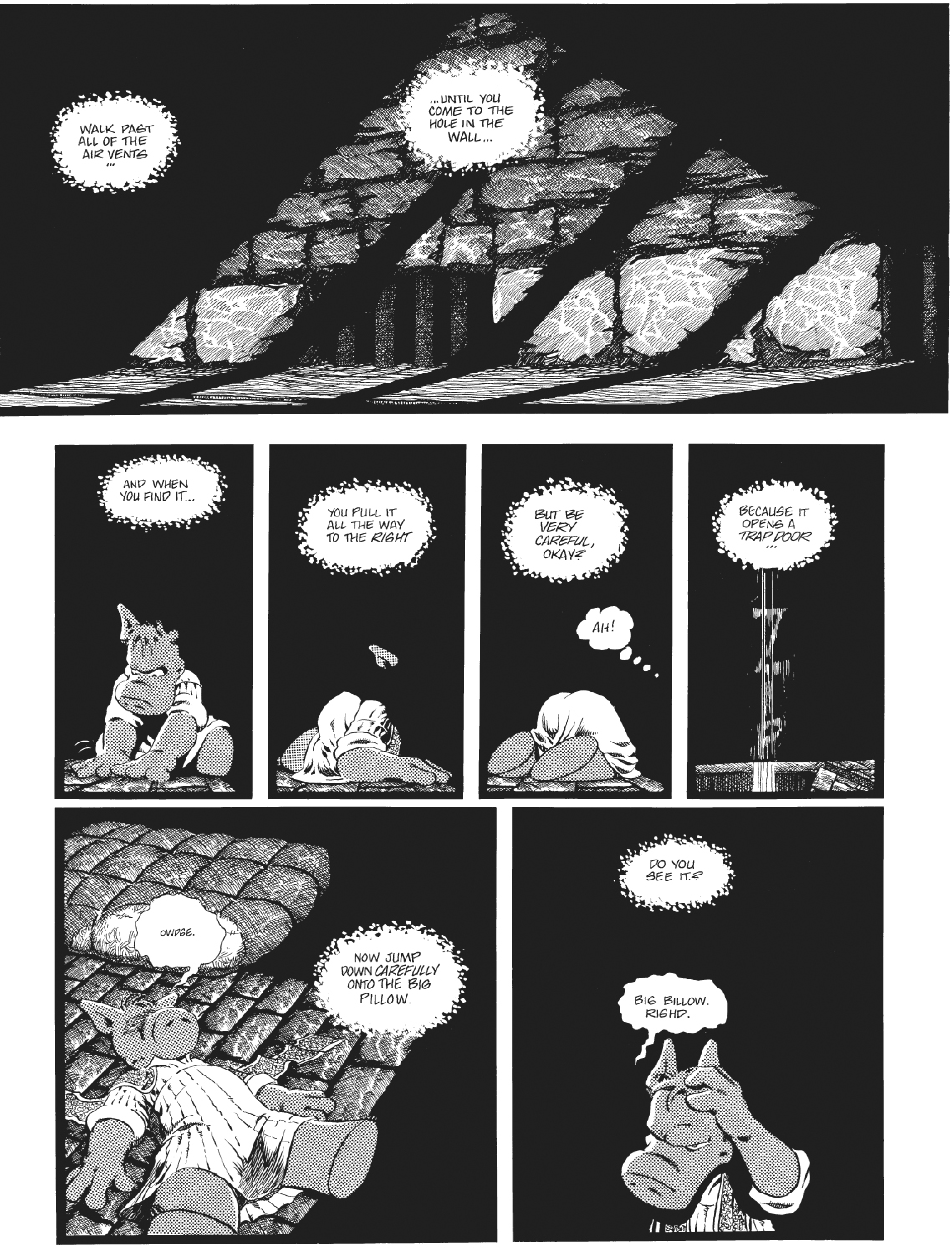

PUFF
PUFF
PUFF
PUFF
PUFF
PUFF
PUFF
...DON'T GET MAD AT AN ELF....
PUFF
...DON'T...
PUF
...GET MAD AT...
PUF-PUFF
PUFF
AN ELF
PUFF
BOY! ARE YOU EVER SLOW!
DO'D-GED-BAD-AD-A-ELF--!
DO'D-GED-BAD-AD-A-ELF!
HOW BUCH FURDER IS ID, ELF?
YOU SHOULD BE HERE BY NOW...
MAYBE IF YOU TRIED CLIMBING THE STEPS TWO AT A TIME...

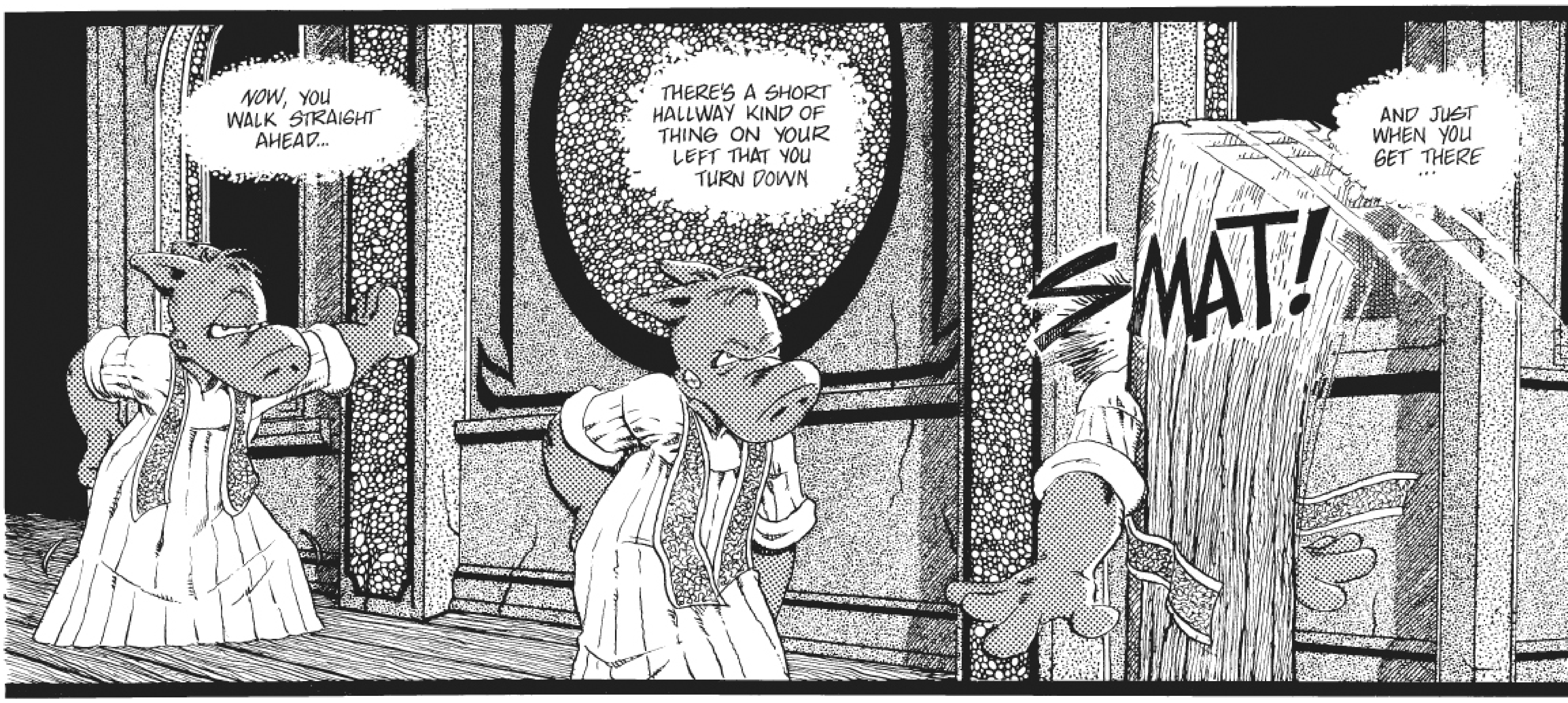

PUFF
...DON'T GET...
PUFF
PUFF
...DON'T GET MAD...
PUFF
PUFF
PUFF
...AT AN...
PUFF
...ELF...
PUFF
PUFF
DON'T GET MAD AT AN
PUFF
TARIM.

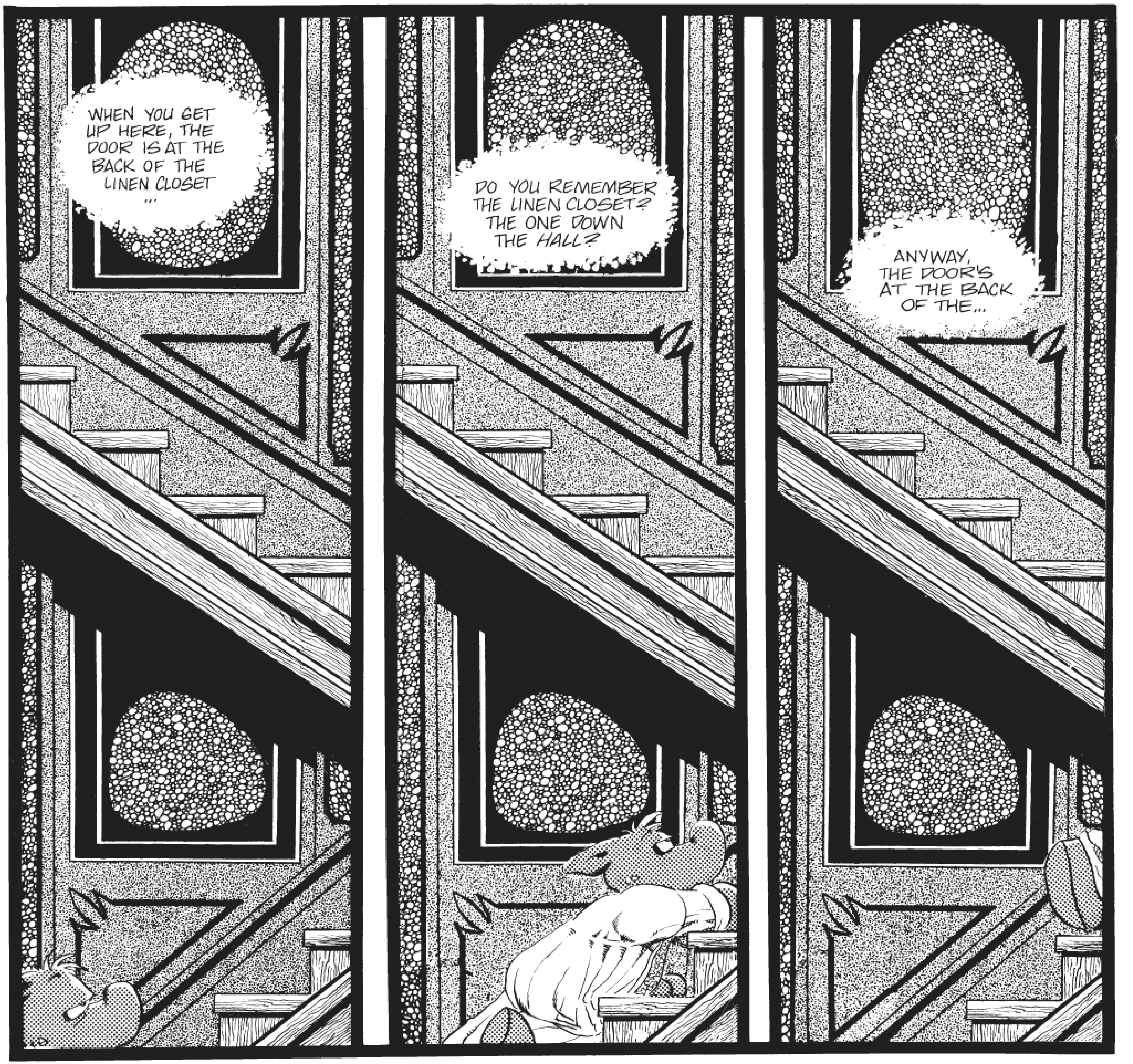

OGAY. DOW WHAD?
WHERE ARE YOU?
BOST HOLY DUST CABE T'ROUGH A *DOOR*...
DID IT HAVE A *CIRCLE* OR A *SQUARE* ON IT?
A *CIRCLE*.
OKAY. THAT MEANS YOU'RE ONE FLOOR BELOW THE KITCHEN.

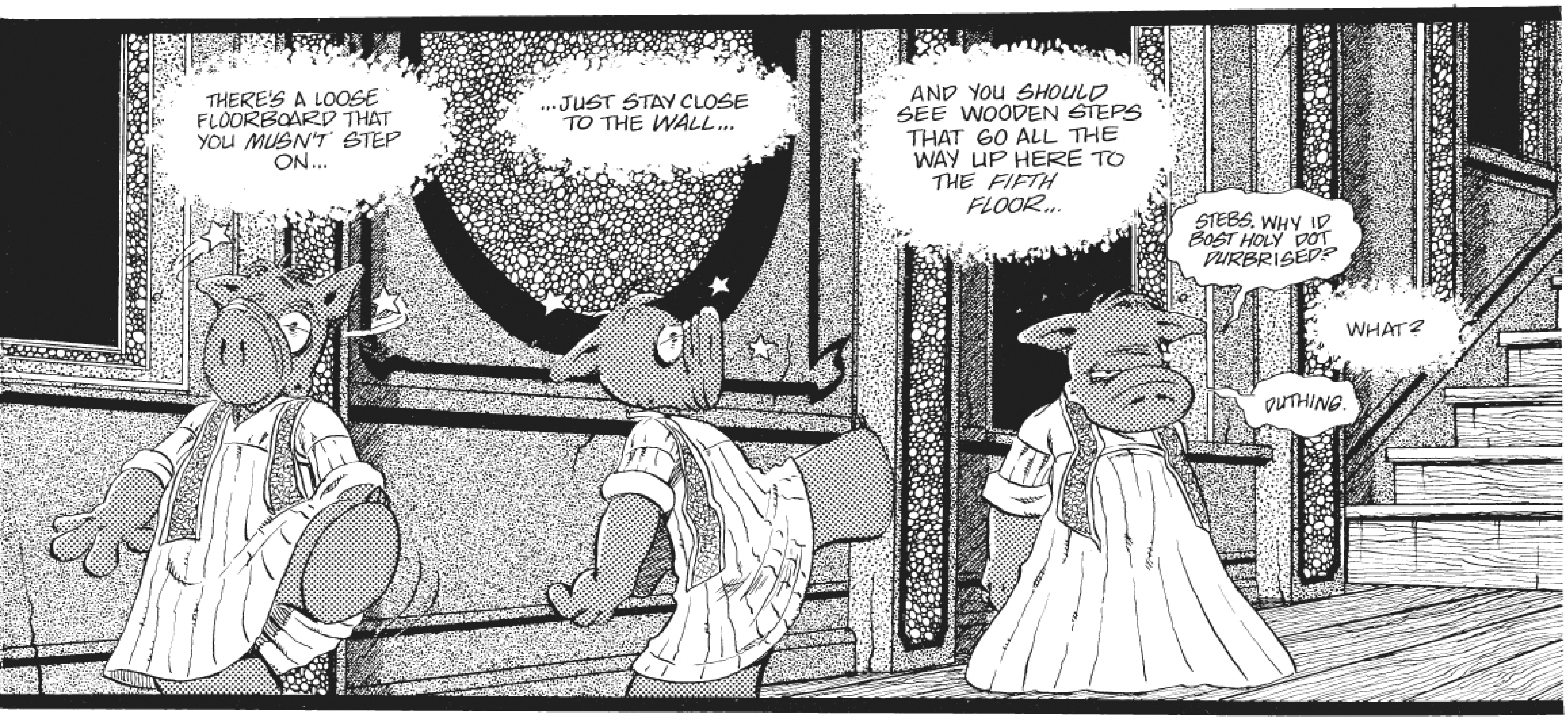

NOW, WALK THROUGH THE HOLE, TURN RIGHT, AND KEEP WALKING...
ID'S DARG ID HERE ...
NOW, KEEP WALKING UNTIL YOU REACH A RAISED PART IN THE FLOOR...

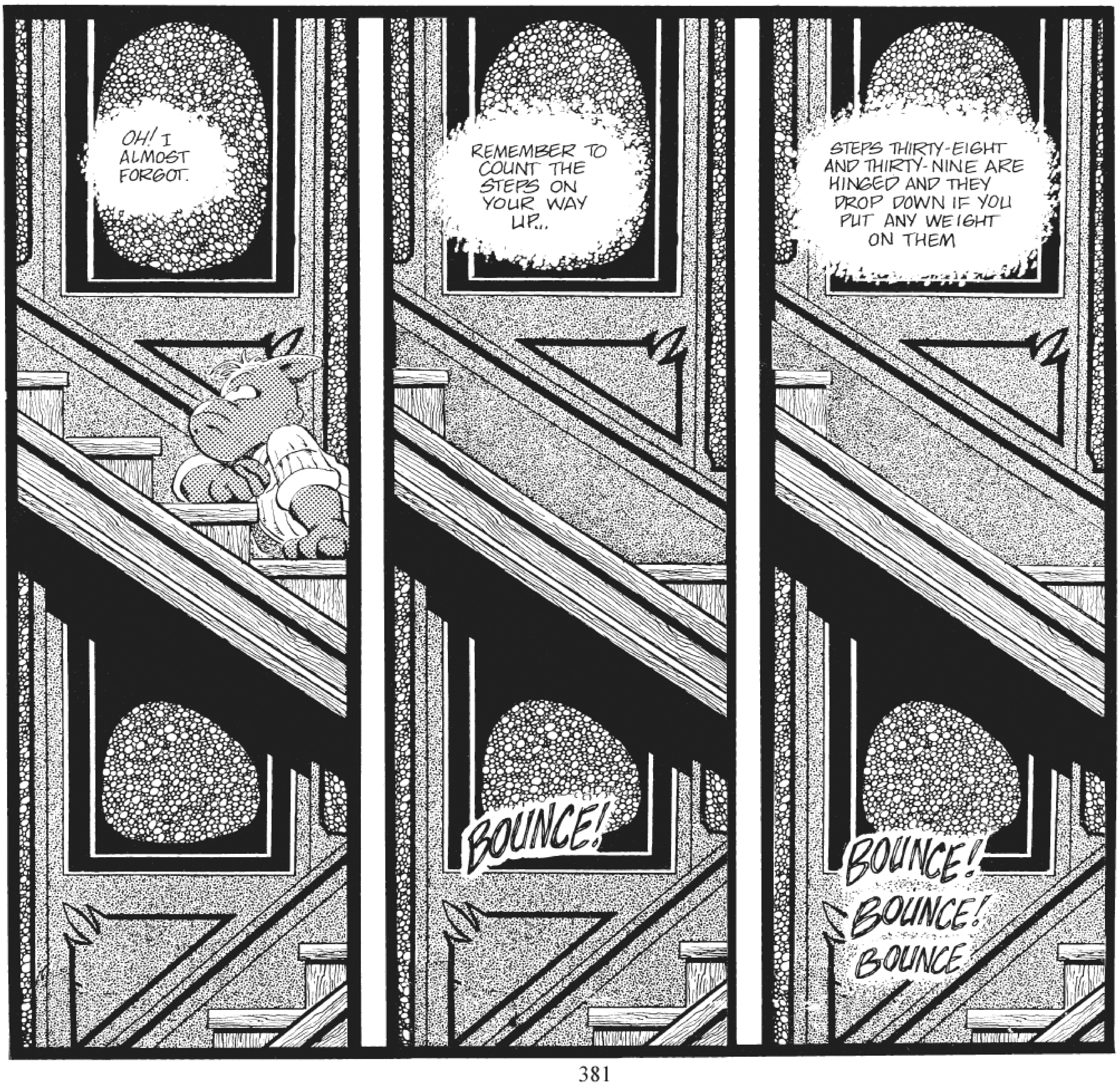

BOST HOLY CA'D SEE! HOW ID HE GOI'G TO FI'D A...
TRIP!
OGAY.
NOW FEEL AROUND FOR A LITTLE HANDLE

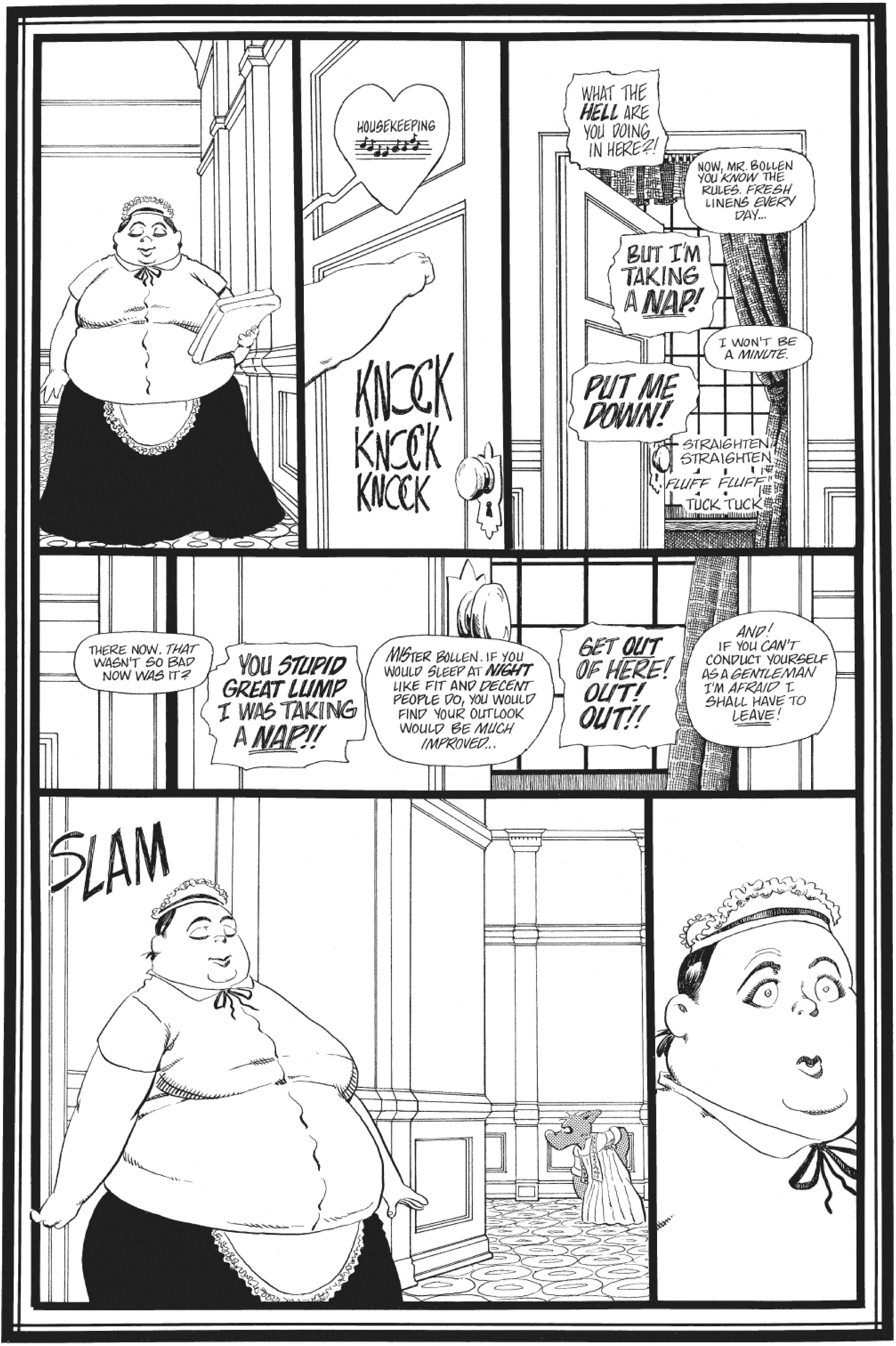

WALK PAST ALL OF THE AIR VENTS ...
...UNTIL YOU COME TO THE HOLE IN THE WALL...
AND WHEN YOU FIND IT...
YOU PULL IT ALL THE WAY TO THE *RIGHT*
BUT BE *VERY CAREFUL*, OKAY?
AH!
BECAUSE IT OPENS A *TRAP DOOR* ...
OWDGE.
NOW JUMP DOWN *CAREFULLY* ONTO THE BIG PILLOW.
DO YOU SEE IT?
BIG BILLOW. RIGHD.

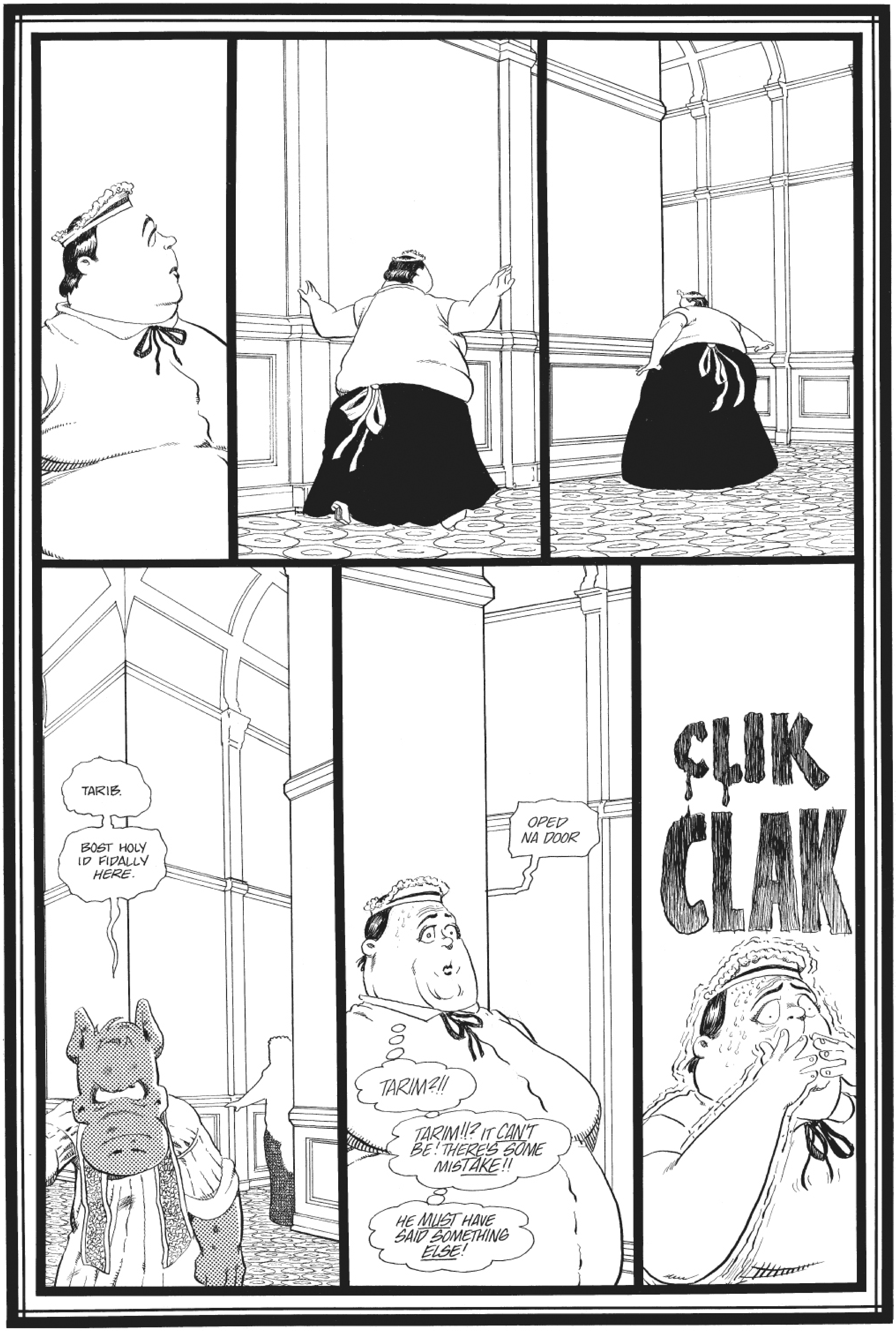

NOW, YOU WALK STRAIGHT AHEAD...
THERE'S A SHORT HALLWAY KIND OF THING ON YOUR LEFT THAT YOU TURN DOWN
AND JUST WHEN YOU GET THERE ...
SMAT!

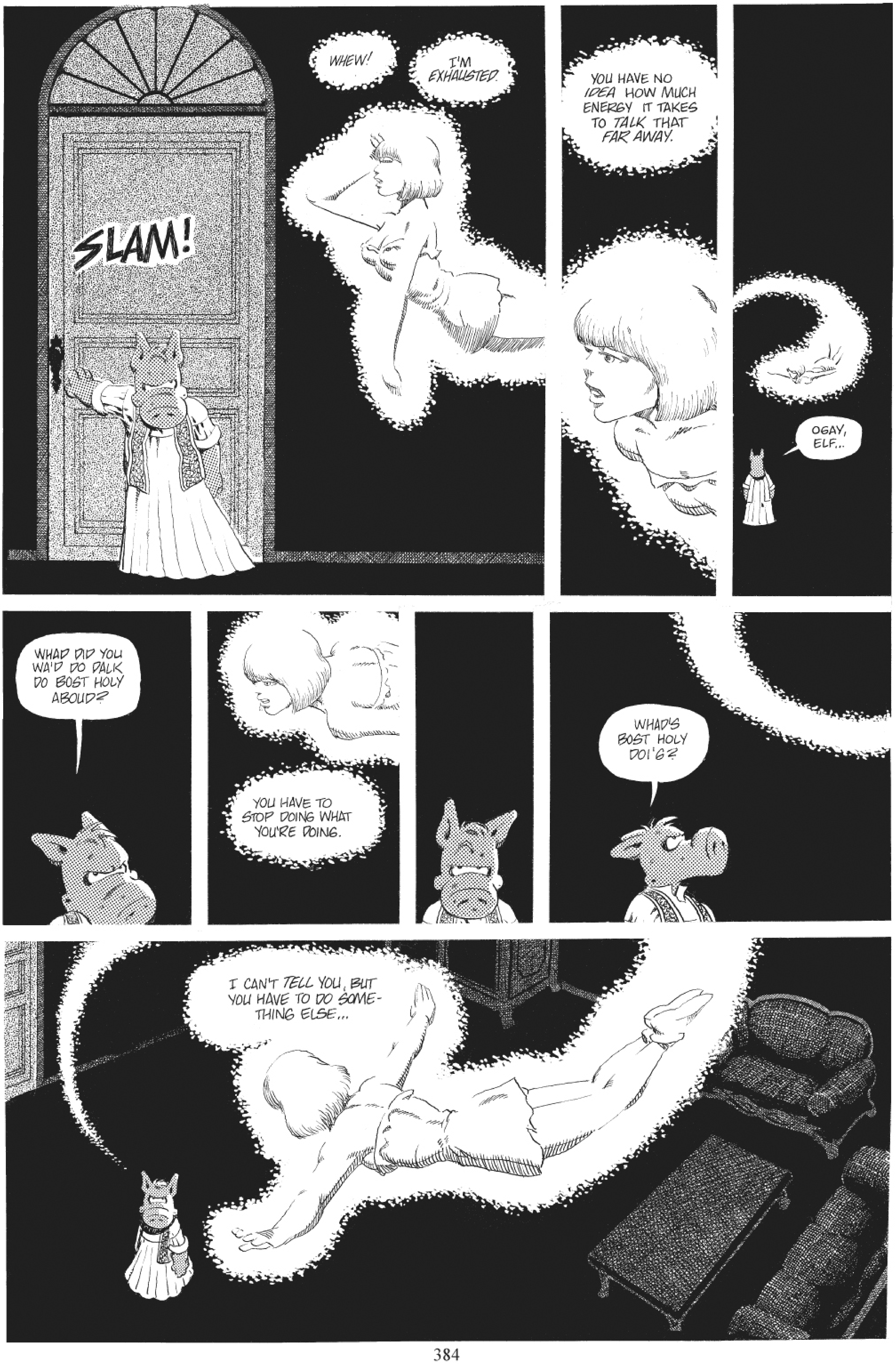

WHEN YOU GET UP HERE, THE DOOR IS AT THE BACK OF THE LINEN CLOSET ...
DO YOU REMEMBER THE LINEN CLOSET? THE ONE DOWN THE *HALL*?
ANYWAY, THE DOOR'S AT THE BACK OF THE...

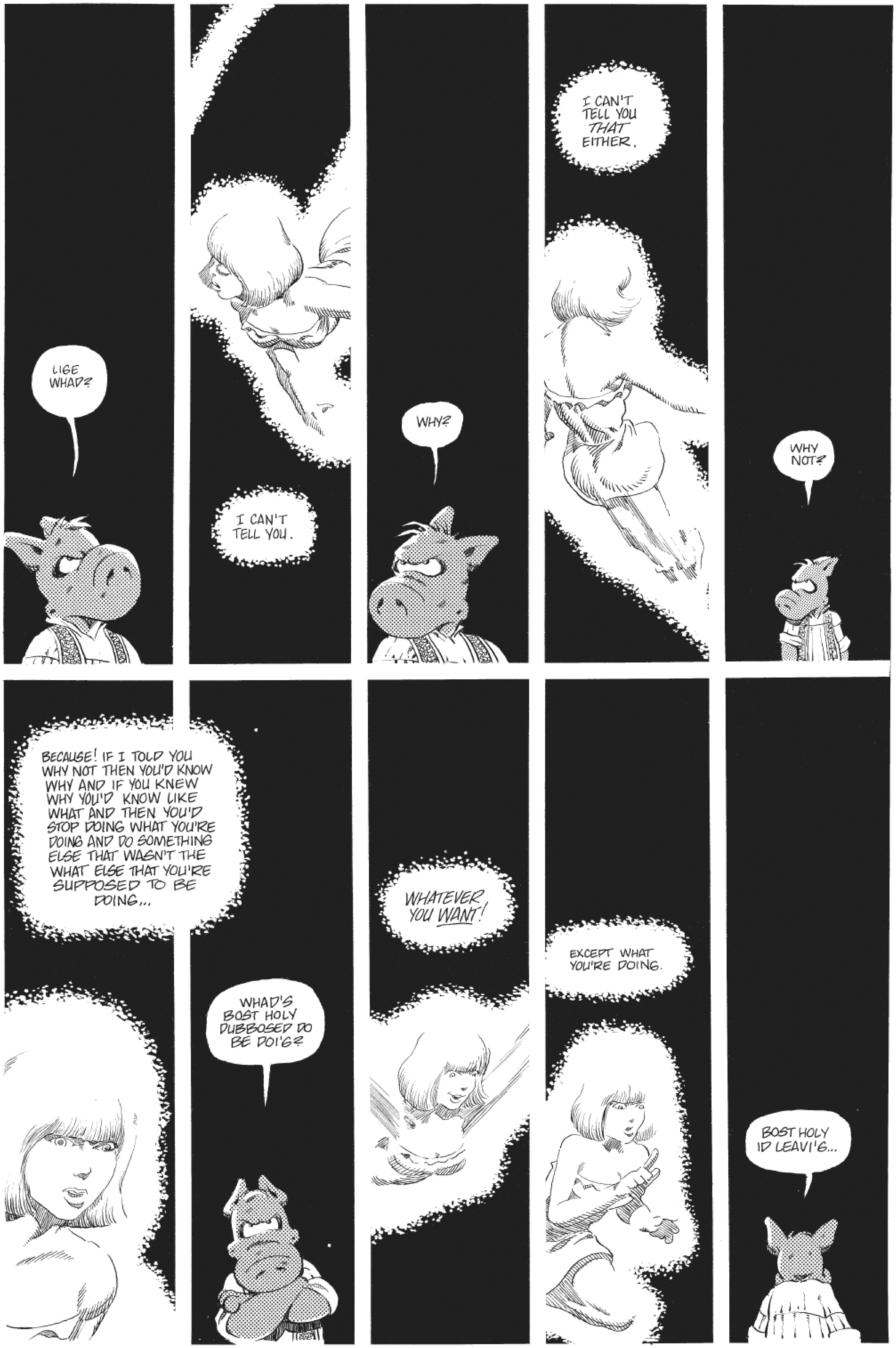

THERE'S A LOOSE FLOORBOARD THAT YOU *MUSN'T* STEP ON...
...JUST STAY CLOSE TO THE *WALL*...
AND YOU *SHOULD* SEE WOODEN STEPS THAT GO ALL THE WAY UP HERE TO THE *FIFTH FLOOR*...
STEBS. WHY ID BOST HOLY DOT DURBRISED?
WHAT?
DUTHING.

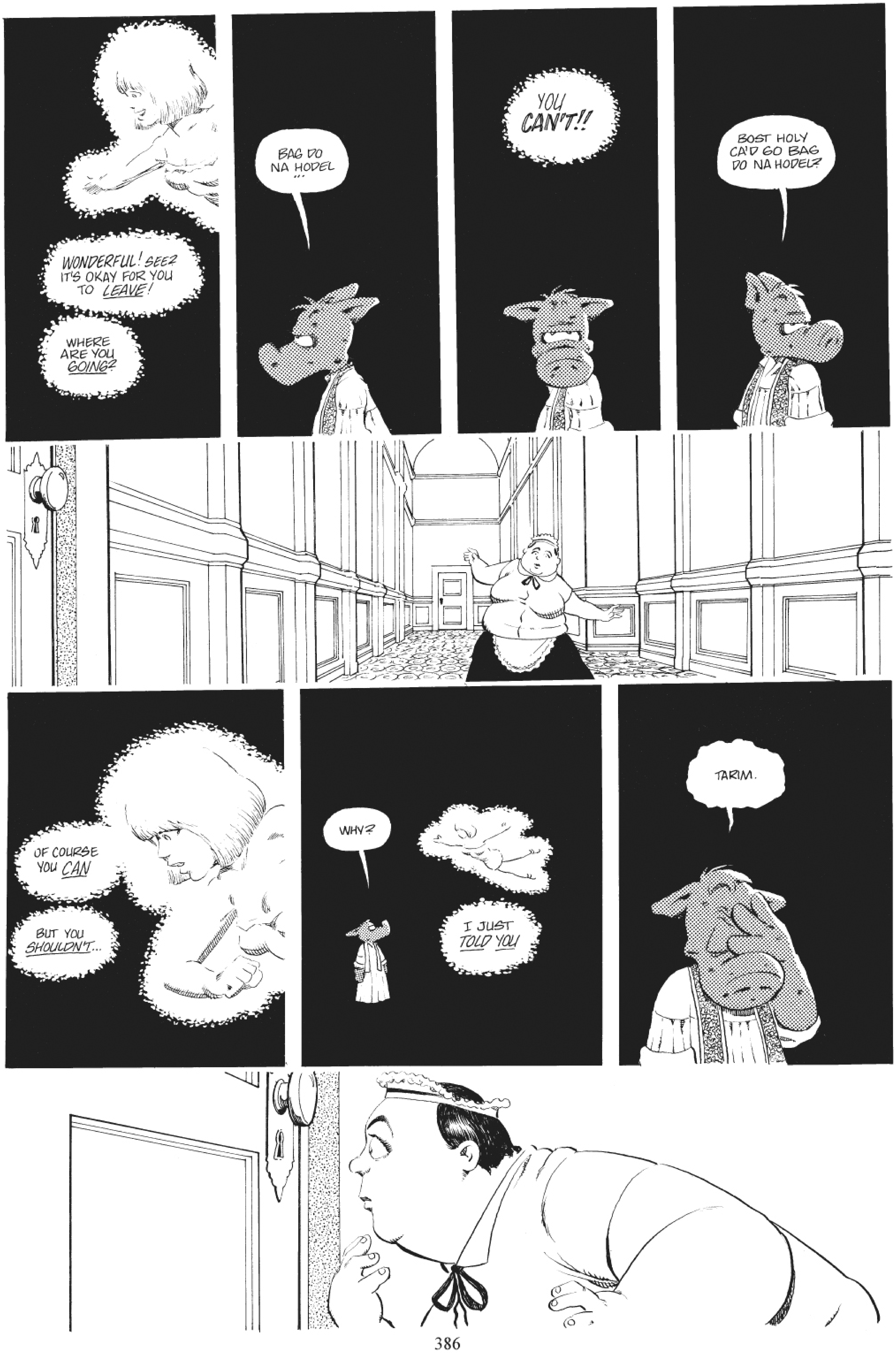

OH! I ALMOST FORGOT.
REMEMBER TO COUNT THE STEPS ON YOUR WAY UP...
BOUNCE!
STEPS THIRTY-EIGHT AND THIRTY-NINE ARE HINGED AND THEY DROP DOWN IF YOU PUT ANY WEIGHT ON THEM
BOUNCE!
BOUNCE!
BOUNCE

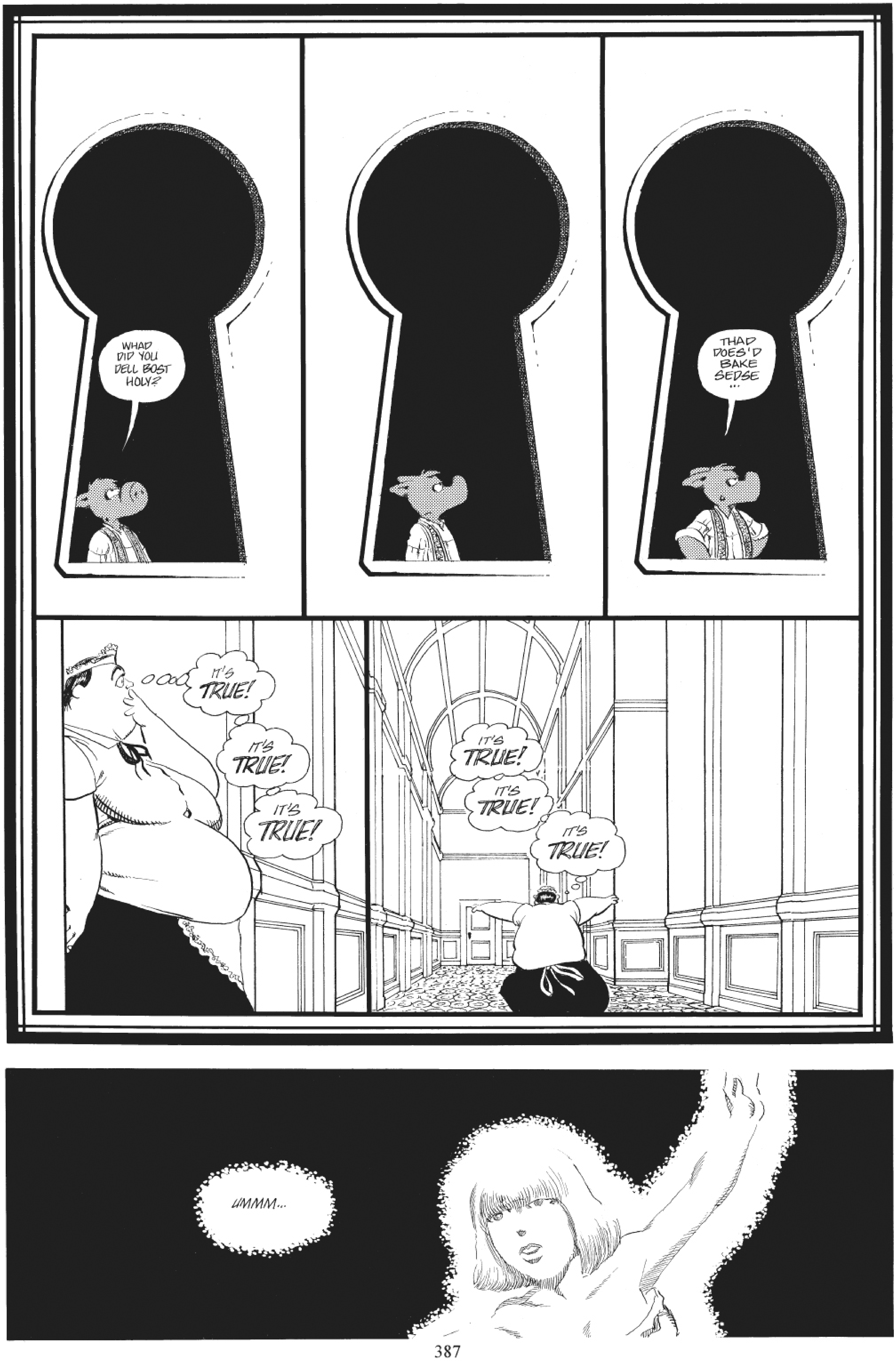

HOUSEKEEPING
KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING IN HERE?!
NOW, MR. BOLLEN YOU KNOW THE RULES. FRESH LINENS EVERY DAY...
BUT I'M TAKING A NAP!
I WON'T BE A MINUTE.
PUT ME DOWN!
STRAIGHTEN STRAIGHTEN
FLUFF FLUFF
TUCK TUCK
THERE NOW. THAT WASN'T SO BAD NOW WAS IT?
YOU STUPID GREAT LUMP I WAS TAKING A NAP!!
MISTER BOLLEN. IF YOU WOULD SLEEP AT NIGHT LIKE FIT AND DECENT PEOPLE DO, YOU WOULD FIND YOUR OUTLOOK WOULD BE MUCH IMPROVED...
GET OUT OF HERE! OUT! OUT!!
AND! IF YOU CAN'T CONDUCT YOURSELF AS A GENTLEMAN I'M AFRAID I SHALL HAVE TO LEAVE!
SLAM

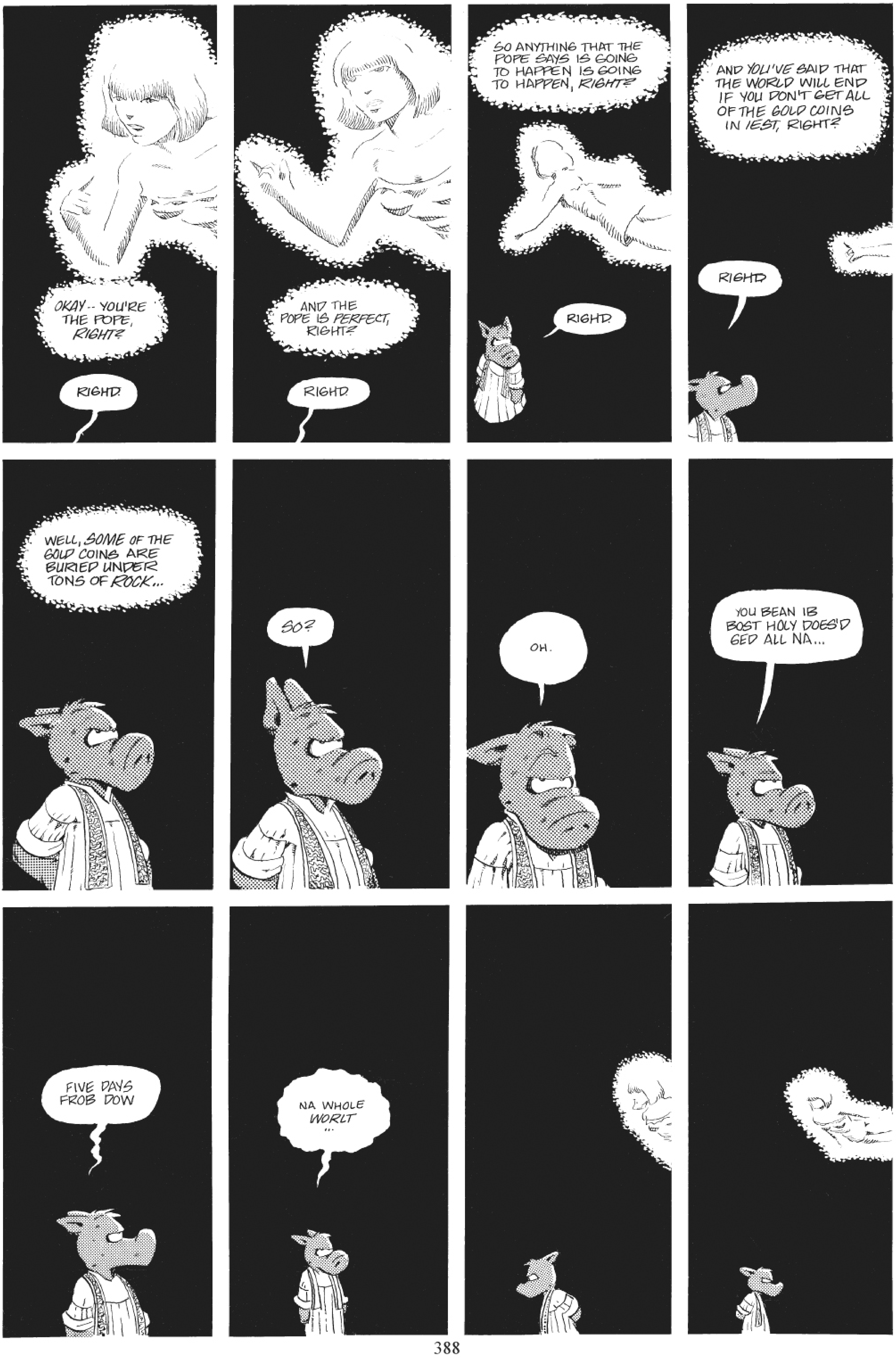

TARIB.
BOST HOLY ID FIDALLY HERE.
OPED NA DOOR
TARIM?!!
TARIM!!? IT CAN'T BE! THERE'S SOME MISTAKE!!
HE MUST HAVE SAID SOMETHING ELSE!
CLIK
CLAK

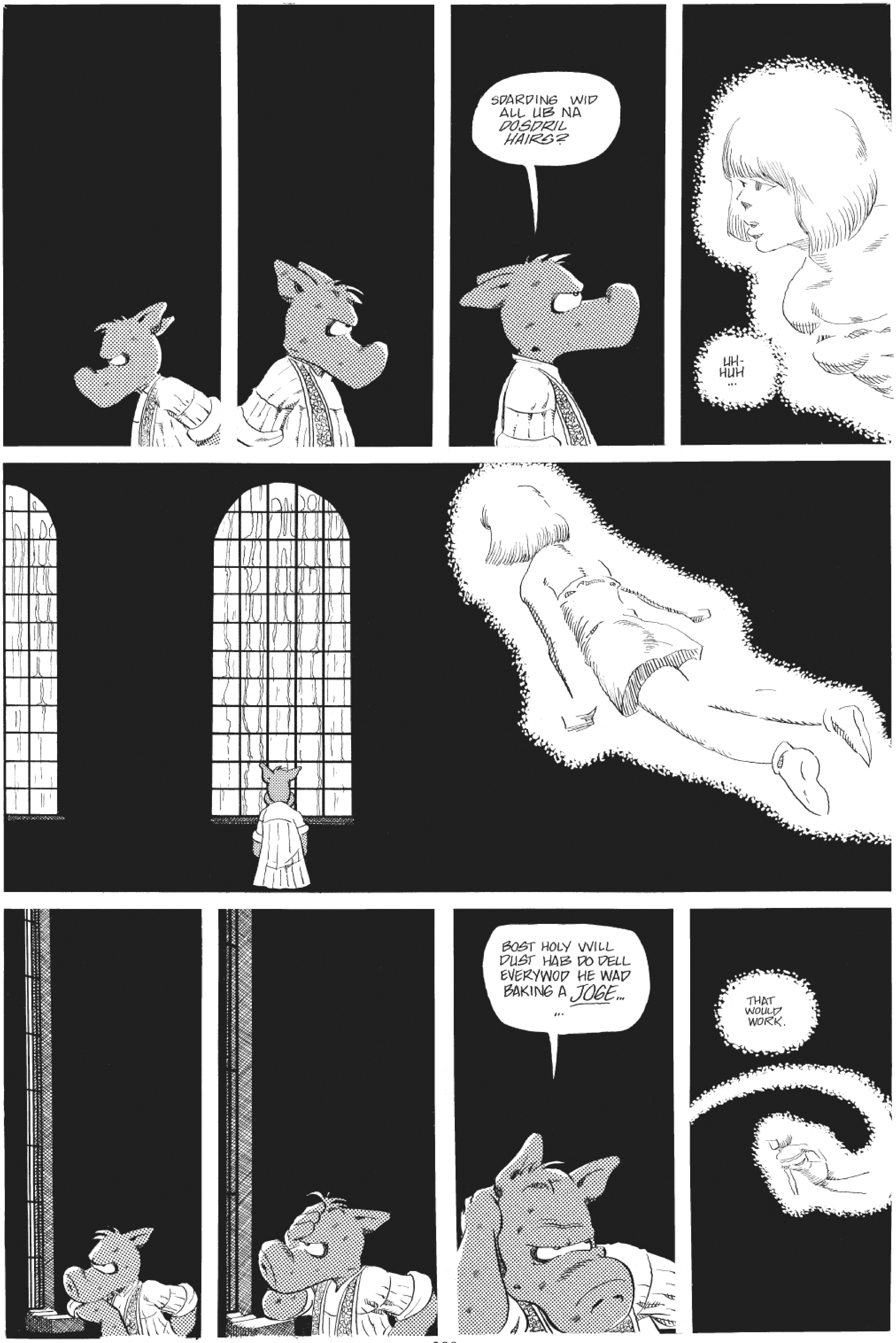

SLAM!
WHEW!
I'M EXHAUSTED.
YOU HAVE NO *IDEA* HOW MUCH ENERGY IT TAKES TO *TALK* THAT *FAR AWAY*.
OGAY, ELF...
WHAD DID YOU WA'D DO DALK DO BOST HOLY ABOUD?
YOU HAVE TO STOP DOING WHAT YOU'RE DOING.
WHAD'S BOST HOLY DOI'G?
I CAN'T *TELL* YOU, BUT YOU HAVE TO DO SOMETHING ELSE...

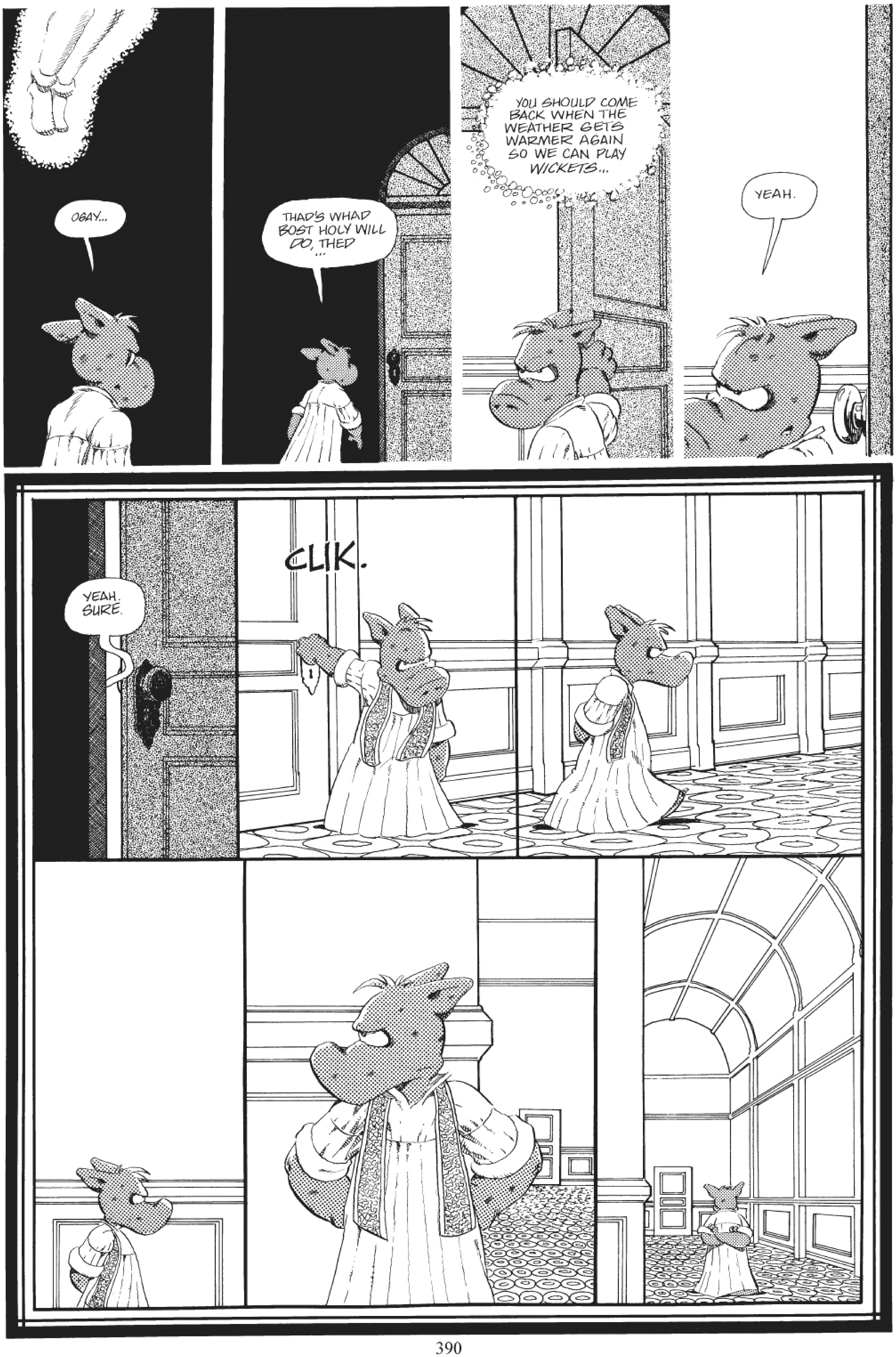

LIGE WHAD?
I CAN'T TELL YOU.
WHY?
I CAN'T TELL YOU *THAT* EITHER.
WHY NOT?
BECAUSE! IF I TOLD YOU WHY NOT THEN YOU'D KNOW WHY AND IF YOU KNEW WHY YOU'D KNOW LIKE WHAT AND THEN YOU'D STOP DOING WHAT YOU'RE DOING AND DO SOMETHING ELSE THAT WASN'T THE WHAT ELSE THAT YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE DOING...
WHAD'S BOST HOLY DUBBOSED DO BE DOI'G?
WHATEVER YOU WANT!
EXCEPT WHAT YOU'RE DOING.
BOST HOLY ID LEAVI'G...

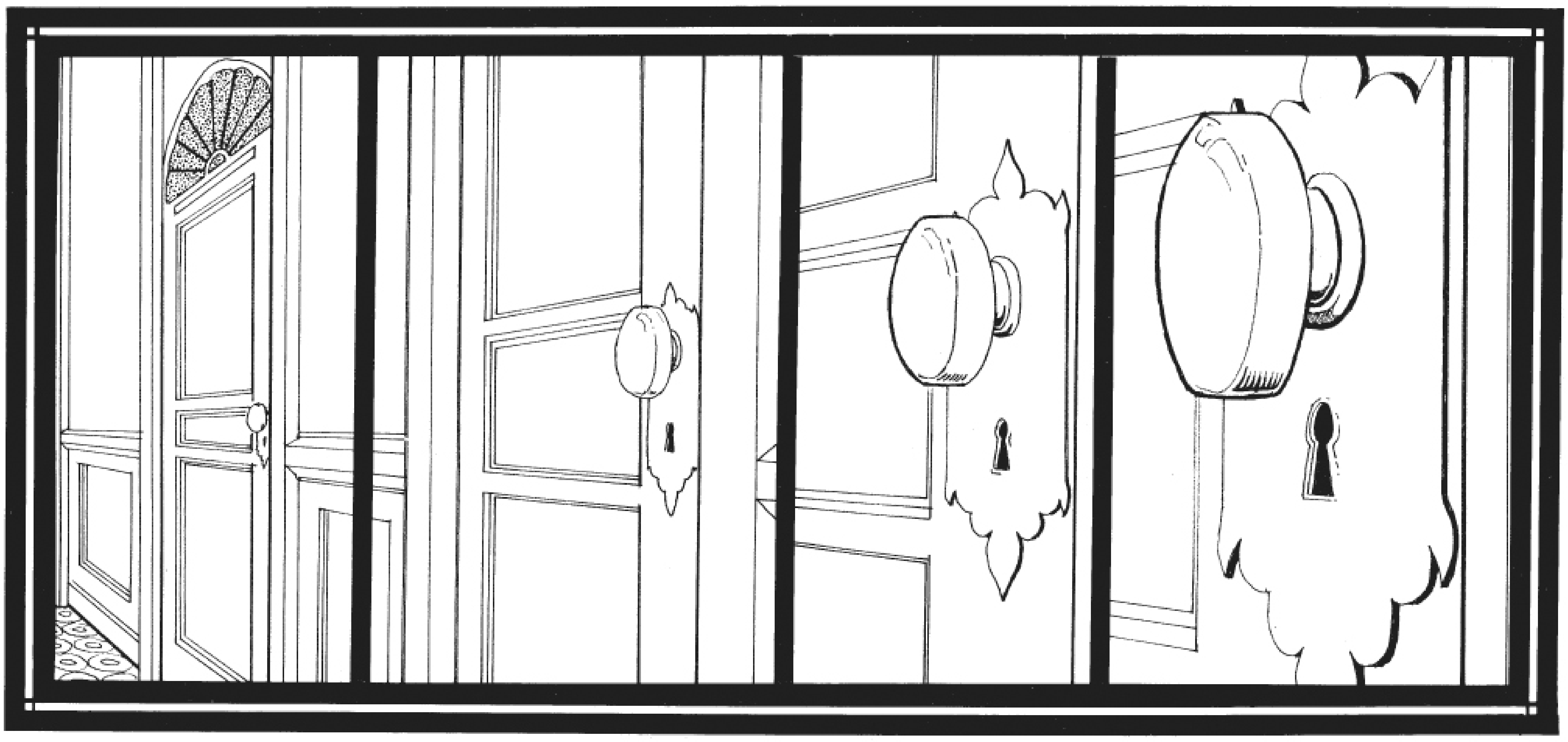

WONDERFUL! SEE? IT'S OKAY FOR YOU TO LEAVE!
WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
BAG DO NA HODEL ...
YOU CAN'T!!
BOST HOLY CA'D GO BAG DO NA HODEL?
OF COURSE YOU CAN
BUT YOU SHOULDN'T...
WHY?
I JUST TOLD YOU
TARIM.

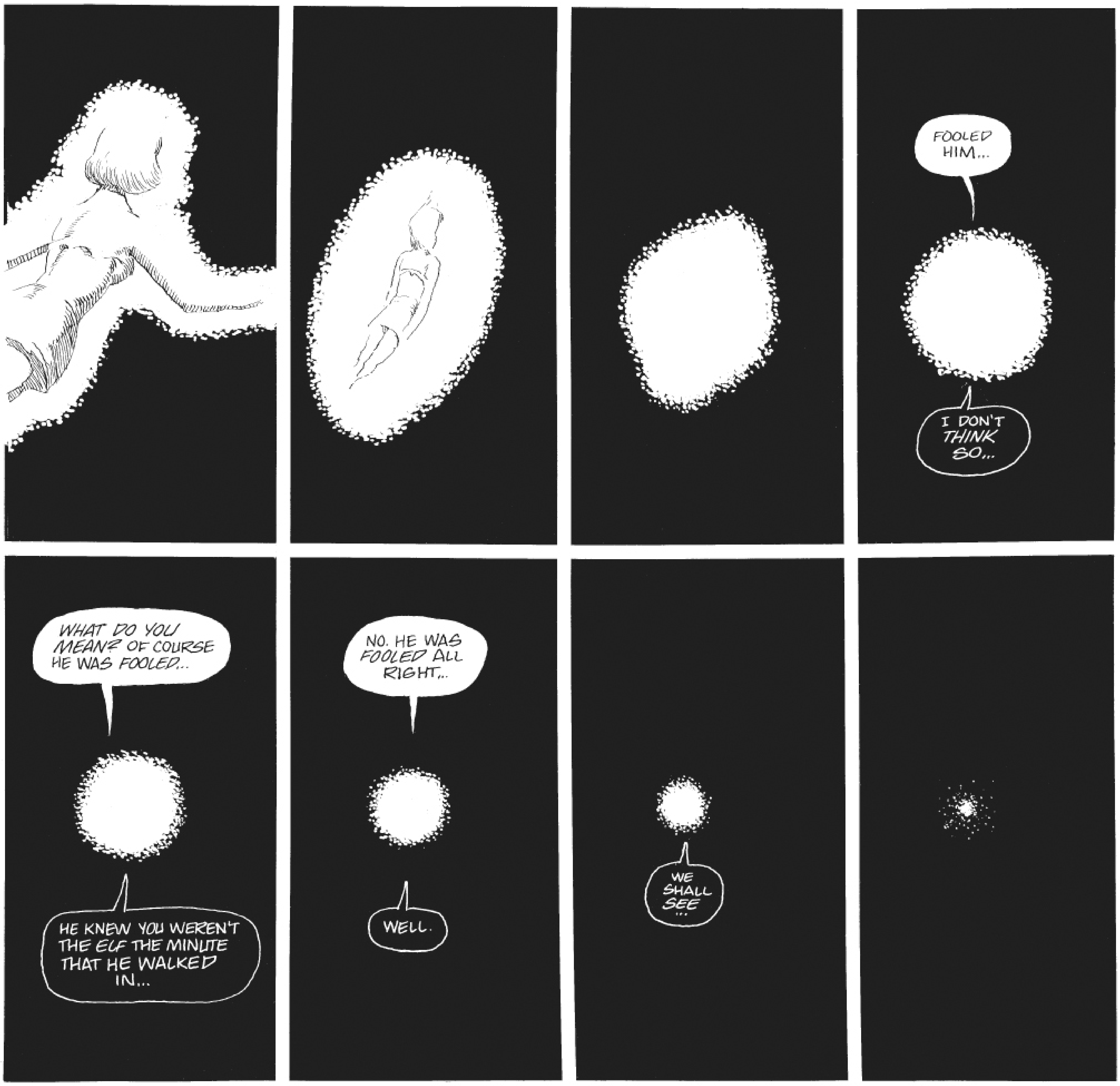

WHAD DID YOU DELL BOST HOLY?
THAD DOES'D BAKE SEDSE ...
IT'S TRUE!
IT'S TRUE!
IT'S TRUE!
IT'S TRUE!
IT'S TRUE!
IT'S TRUE!
UMMM...

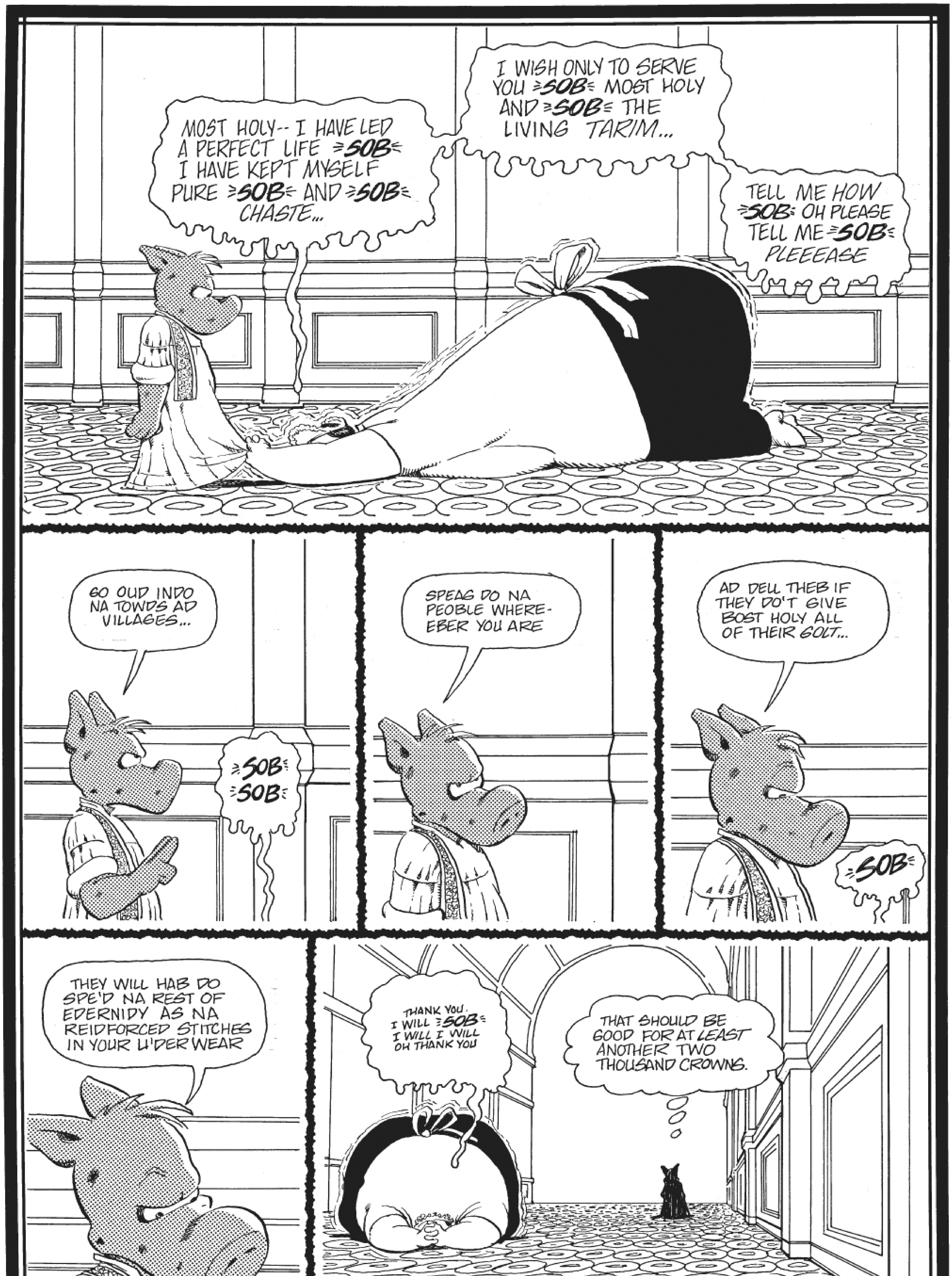

OKAY -- YOU'RE THE POPE, RIGHT?
RIGHD
AND THE POPE IS PERFECT, RIGHT?
RIGHD
SO ANYTHING THAT THE POPE SAYS IS GOING TO HAPPEN IS GOING TO HAPPEN, RIGHT?
RIGHD
AND YOU'VE SAID THAT THE WORLD WILL END IF YOU DON'T GET ALL OF THE GOLD COINS IN IEST, RIGHT?
RIGHD
WELL, SOME OF THE GOLD COINS ARE BURIED UNDER TONS OF ROCK...
SO?
OH.
YOU BEAN IB BOST HOLY DOES'D GED ALL NA...
FIVE DAYS FROB DOW
NA WHOLE WORLT ...

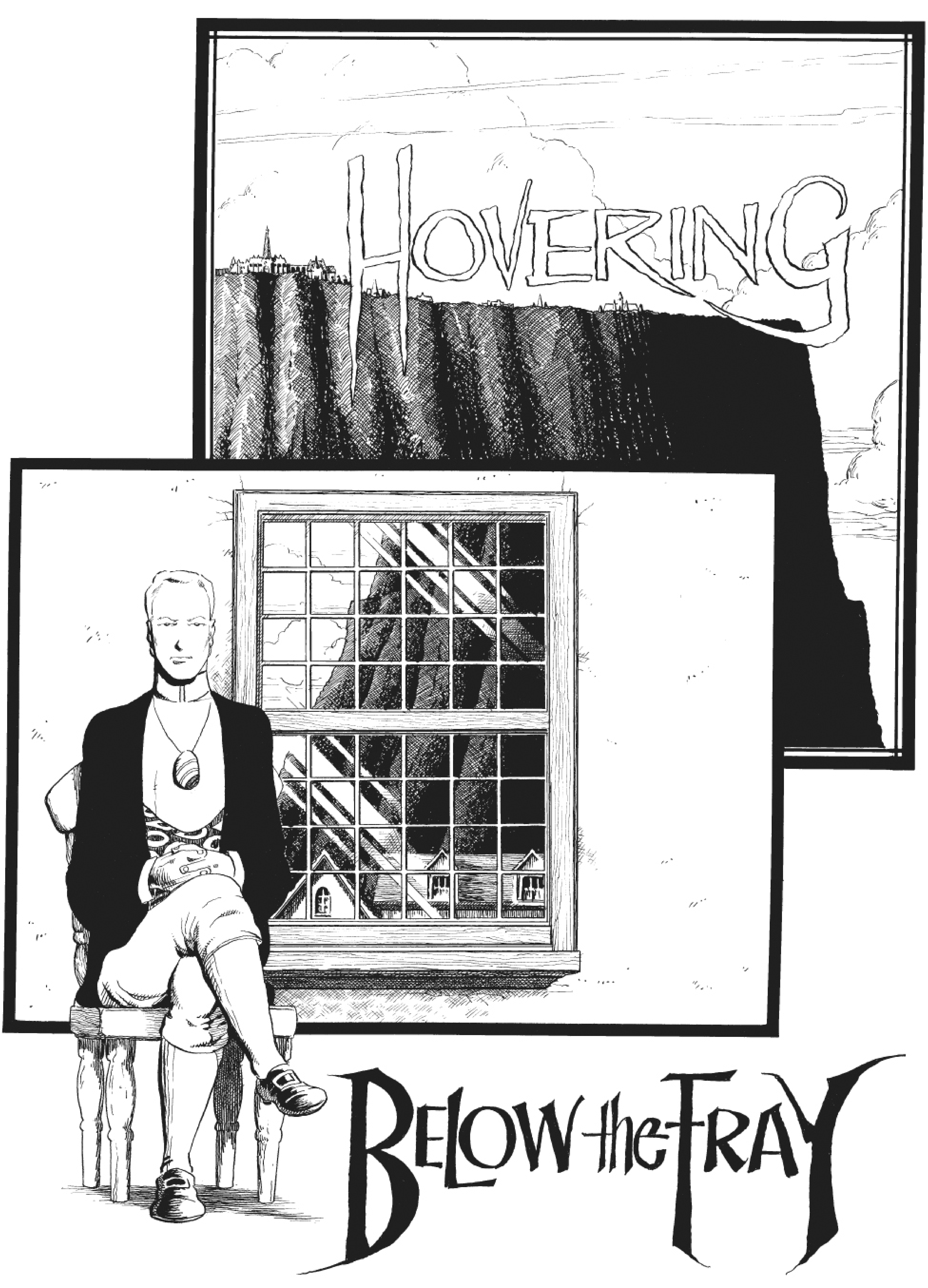

SDARDING WID ALL UB NA DOSDRIL HAIRS?
UH-HUH...
BOST HOLY WILL DUST HAB DO DELL EVERYWOD HE WAD BAKING A JOGE... ...
THAT WOULD WORK.

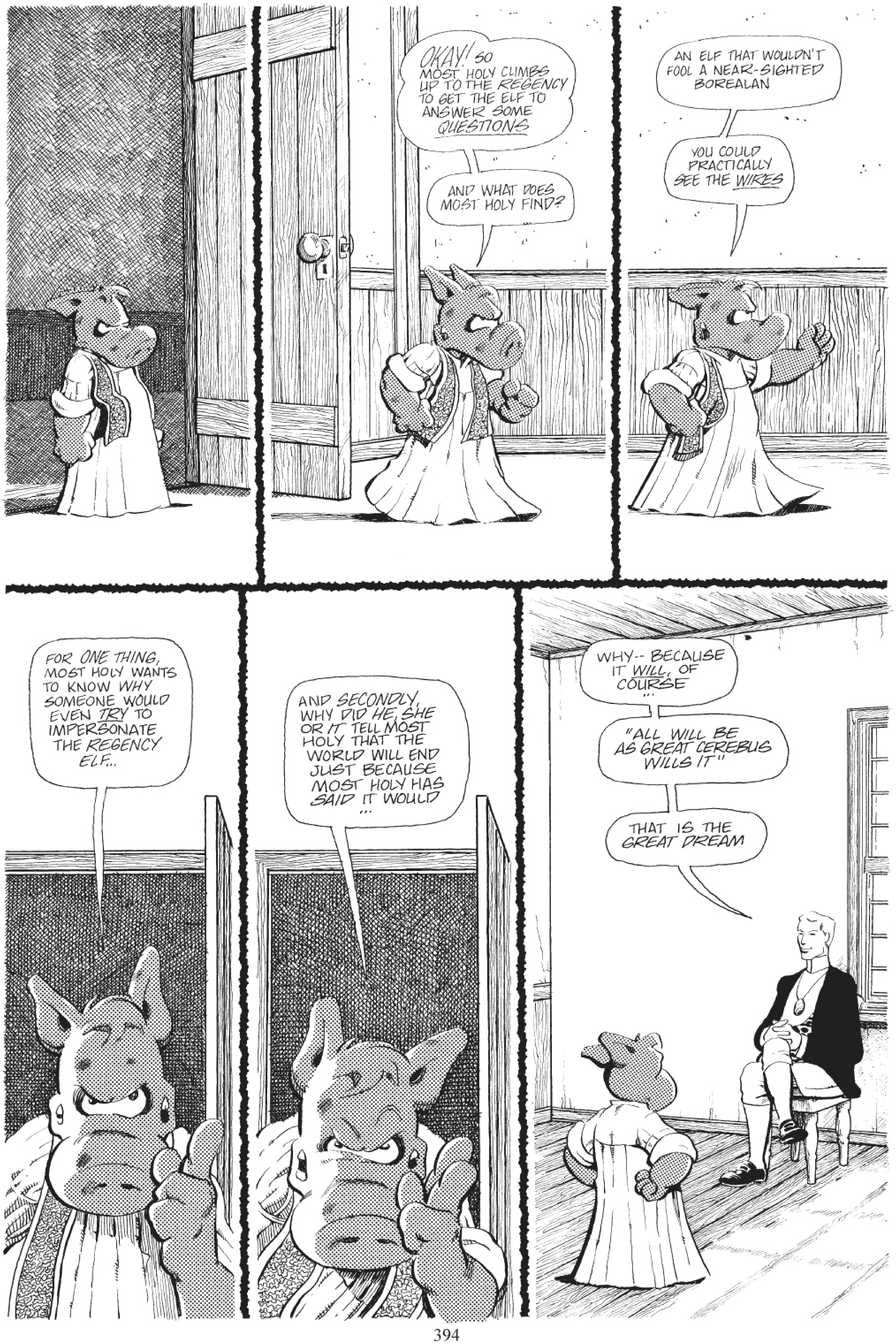

OGAY...
THAD'S WHAD BOST HOLY WILL DO, THED ...
YOU SHOULD COME BACK WHEN THE WEATHER GETS WARMER AGAIN SO WE CAN PLAY *WICKETS*...
YEAH.
YEAH. SURE.
CLIK.

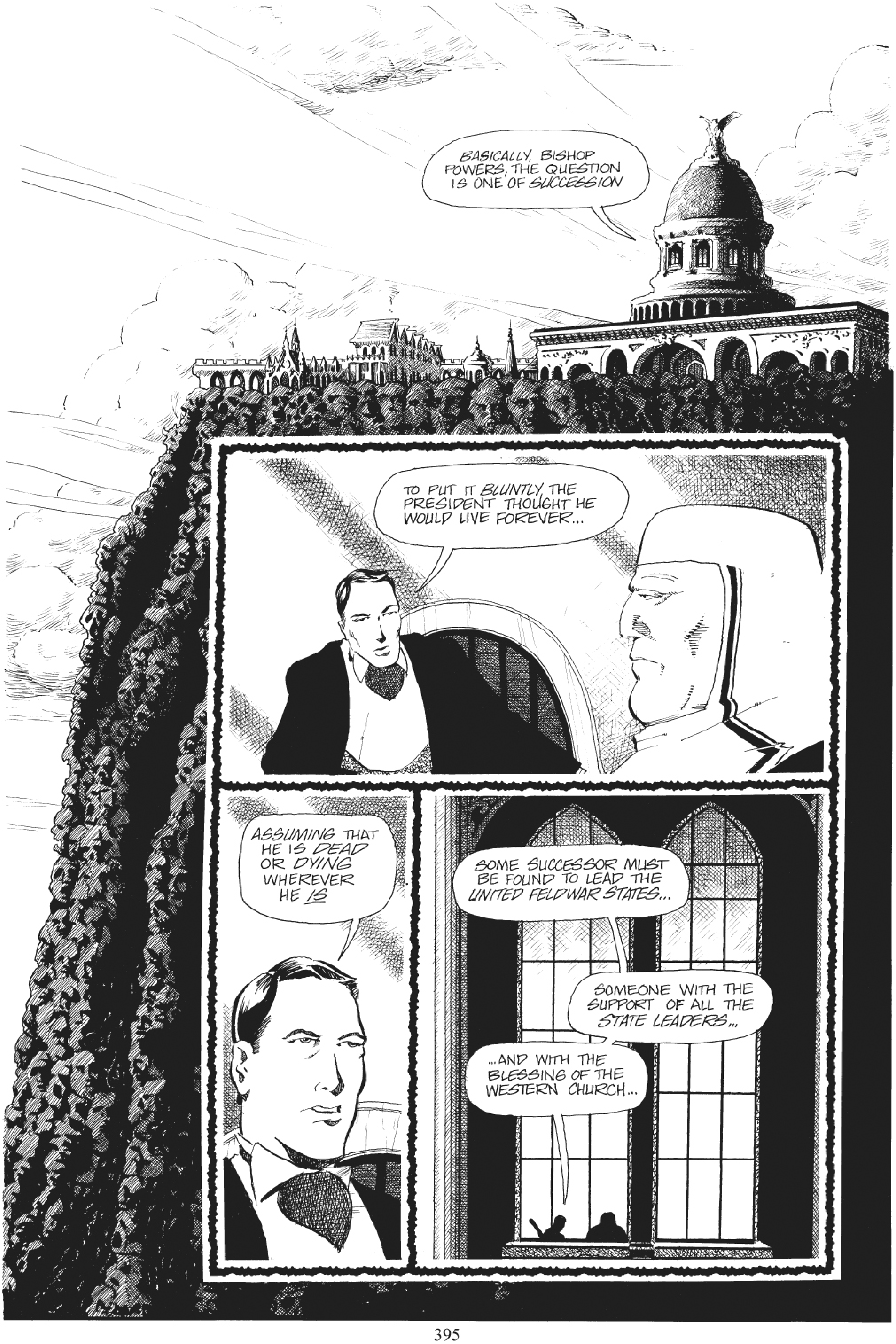


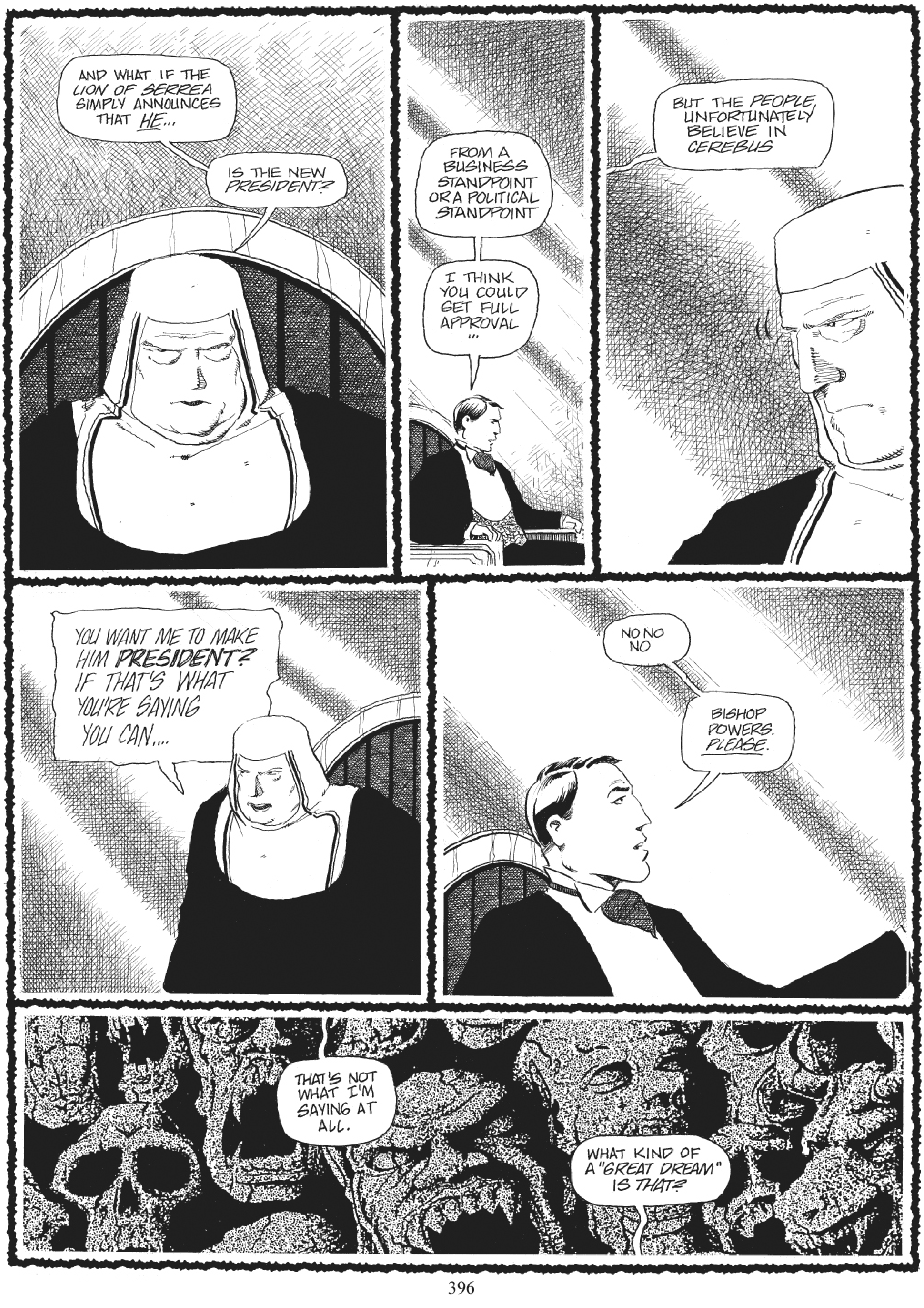

FOOLED HIM...
I DON'T THINK SO...
WHAT DO YOU MEAN? OF COURSE HE WAS FOOLED...
HE KNEW YOU WEREN'T THE ELF THE MINUTE THAT HE WALKED IN...
NO. HE WAS FOOLED ALL RIGHT...
WELL.
WE SHALL SEE...

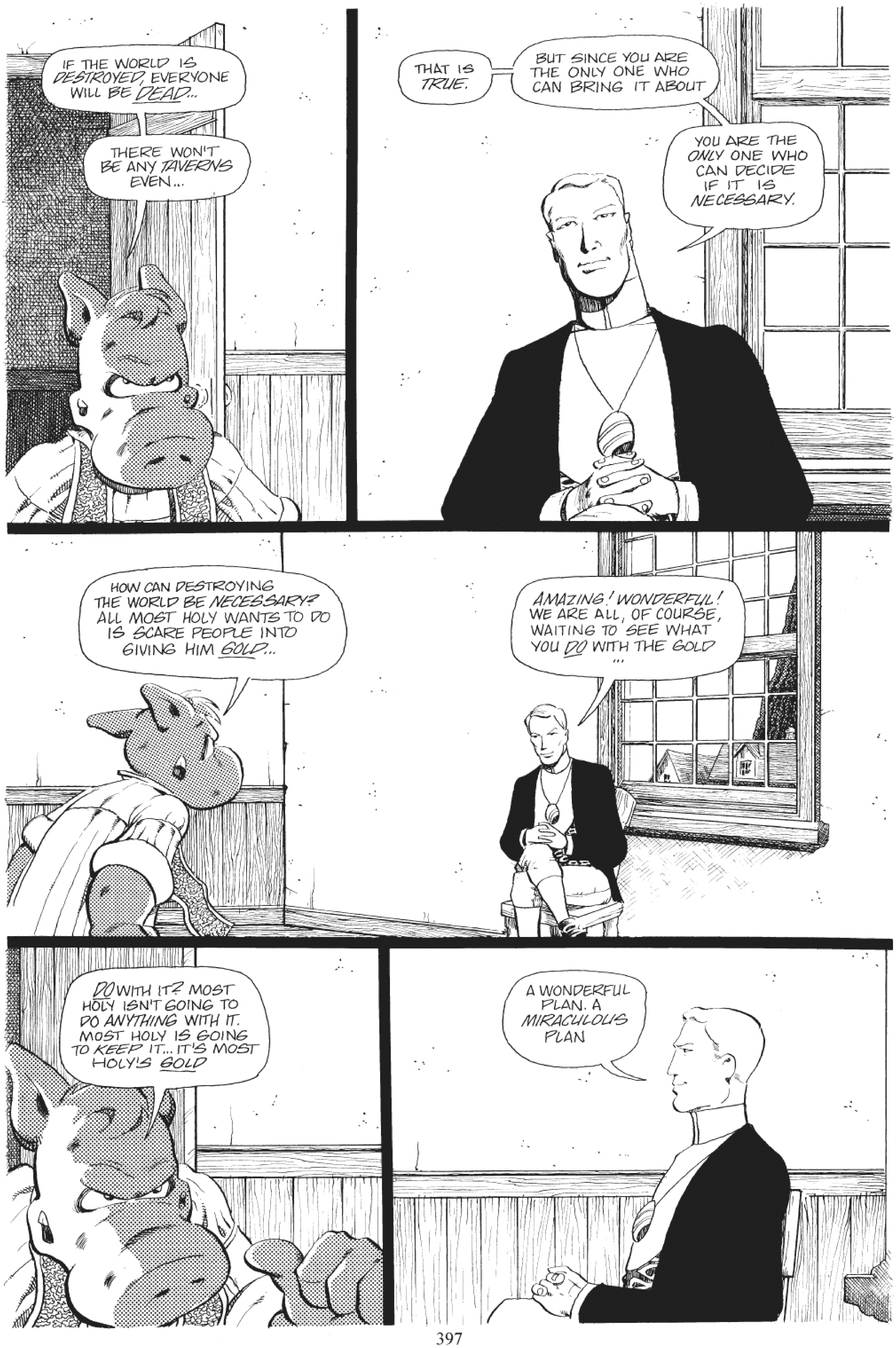

MOST HOLY-- I HAVE LED A PERFECT LIFE SOB I HAVE KEPT MYSELF PURE SOB AND SOB CHASTE...
I WISH ONLY TO SERVE YOU SOB MOST HOLY AND SOB THE LIVING TARIM...
TELL ME HOW SOB OH PLEASE TELL ME SOB PLEEEASE
GO OUD INDO NA TOWDS AD VILLAGES...
SOB SOB
SPEAG DO NA PEOBLE WHERE-EBER YOU ARE
AD DELL THEB IF THEY DO'T GIVE BOST HOLY ALL OF THEIR GOLT...
SOB
THEY WILL HAB DO SPE'D NA REST OF EDERNIDY AS NA REIDFORCED STITCHES IN YOUR U'DERWEAR
THANK YOU. I WILL SOB I WILL I WILL OH THANK YOU
THAT SHOULD BE GOOD FOR AT LEAST ANOTHER TWO THOUSAND CROWNS.

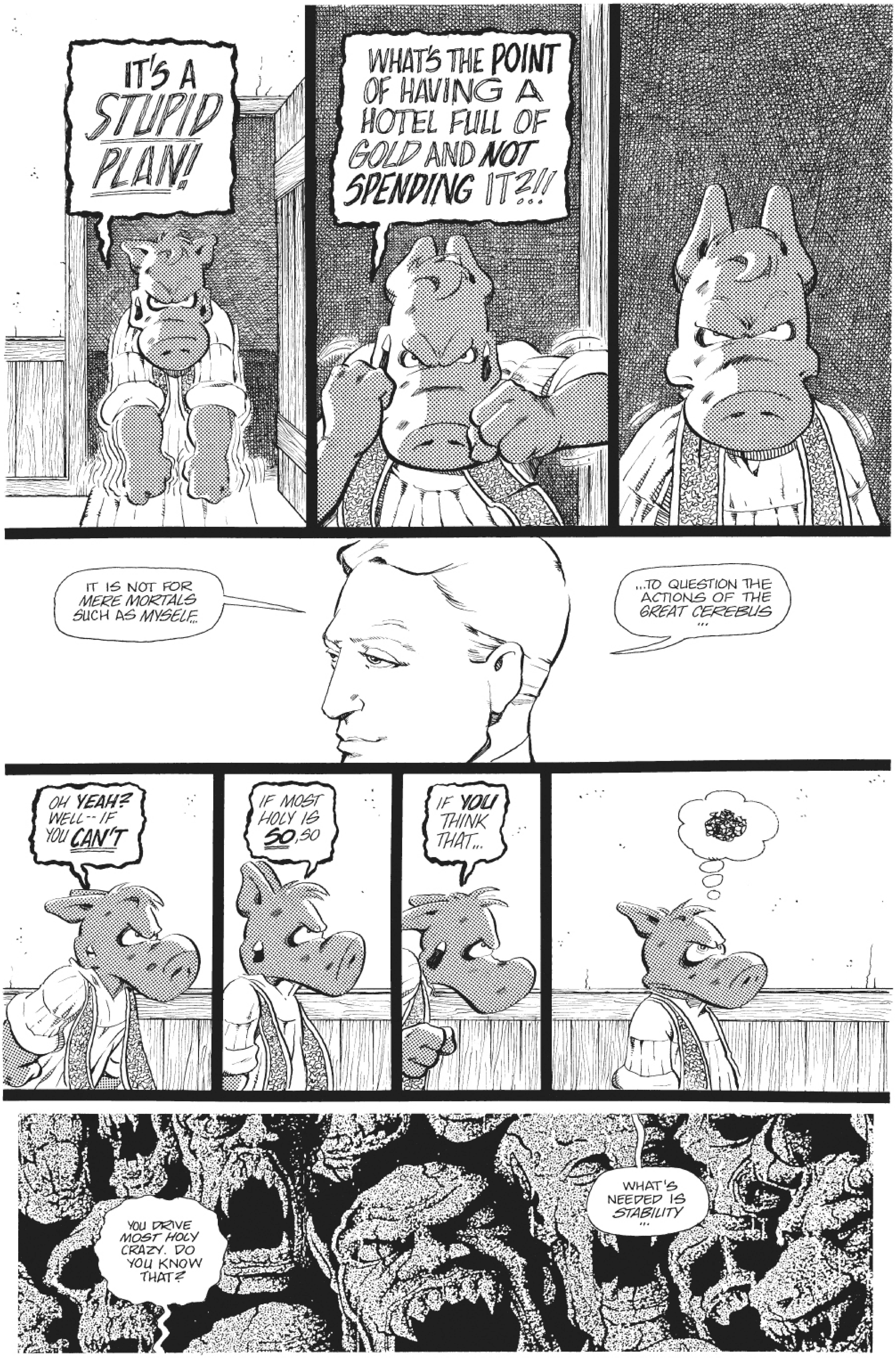

HOVERING
BELOW the FRAY

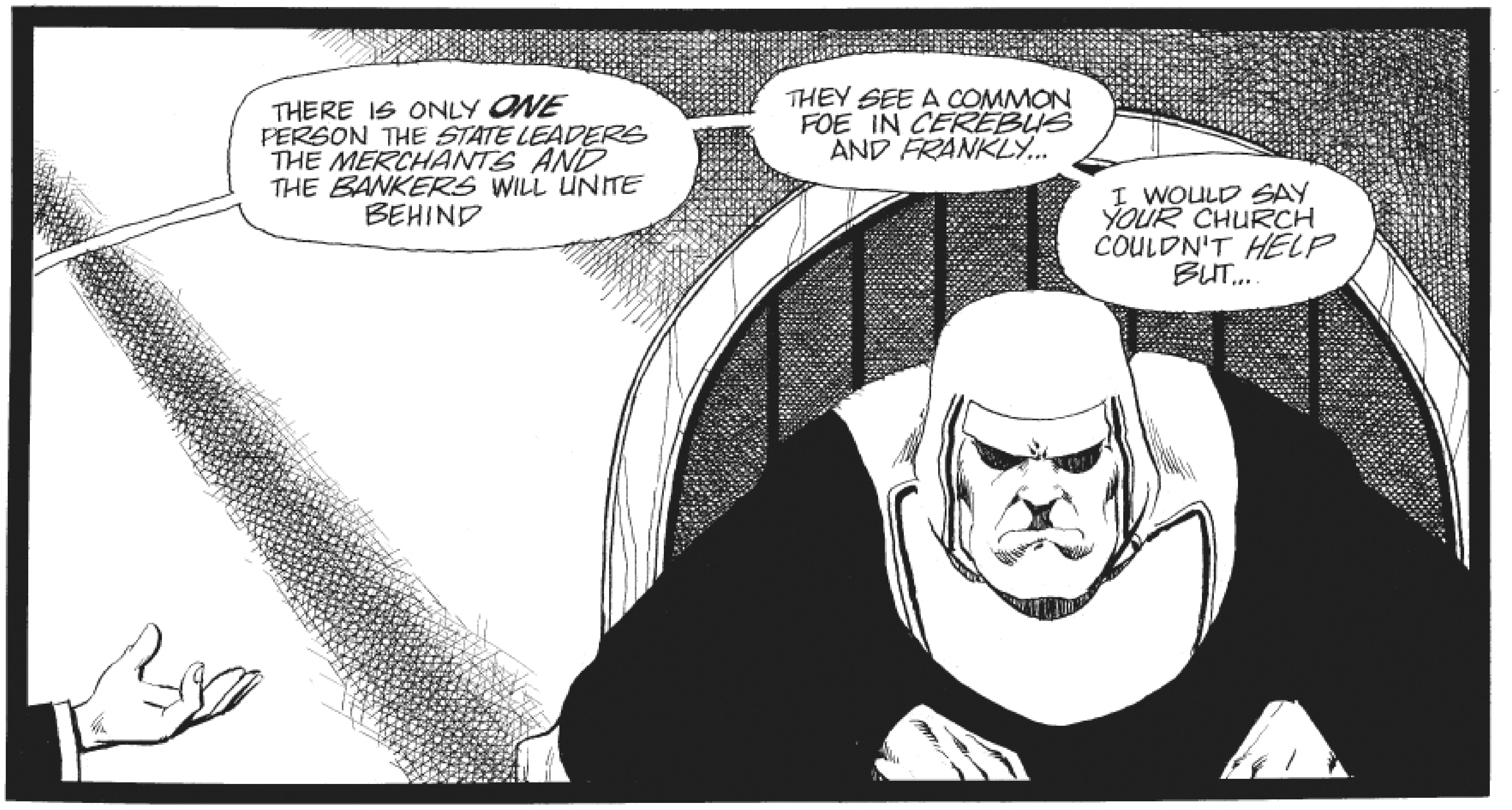

OKAY! SO MOST HOLY CLIMBS UP TO THE REGENCY TO GET THE ELF TO ANSWER SOME QUESTIONS
AND WHAT DOES MOST HOLY FIND?
AN ELF THAT WOULDN'T FOOL A NEAR-SIGHTED BOREALAN
YOU COULD PRACTICALLY SEE THE WIRES
FOR ONE THING, MOST HOLY WANTS TO KNOW WHY SOMEONE WOULD EVEN TRY TO IMPERSONATE THE REGENCY ELF...
AND SECONDLY, WHY DID HE, SHE OR IT TELL MOST HOLY THAT THE WORLD WILL END JUST BECAUSE MOST HOLY HAS SAID IT WOULD ...
WHY-- BECAUSE IT WILL, OF COURSE ...
"ALL WILL BE AS GREAT CEREBUS WILLS IT"
THAT IS THE GREAT DREAM

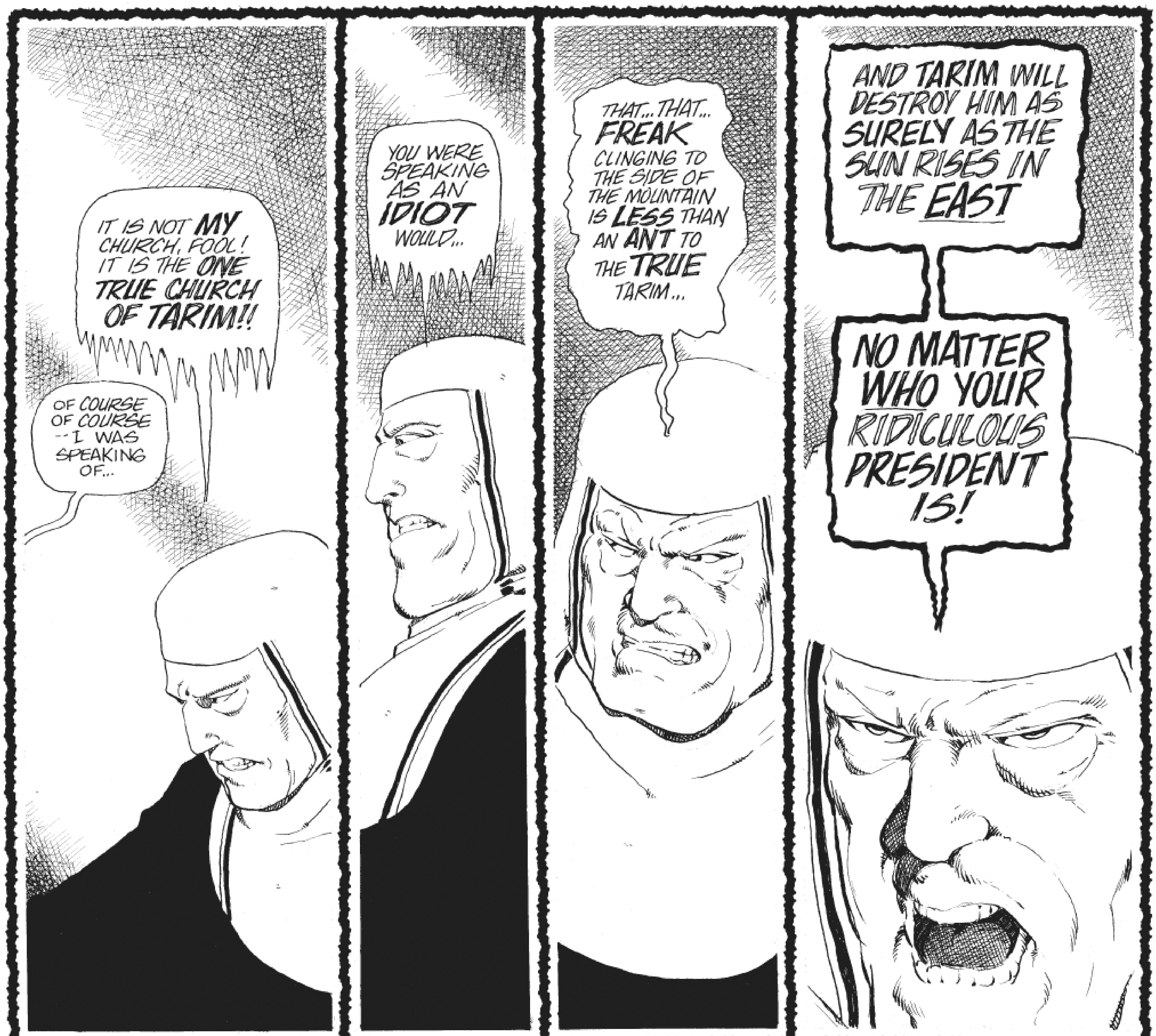

BASICALLY, BISHOP POWERS, THE QUESTION IS ONE OF *SUCCESSION*
TO PUT IT *BLUNTLY*, THE PRESIDENT THOUGHT HE WOULD LIVE FOREVER...
ASSUMING THAT HE IS *DEAD* OR *DYING* WHEREVER HE *IS*
SOME SUCCESSOR MUST BE FOUND TO LEAD THE *UNITED FELDWAR STATES*...
SOMEONE WITH THE SUPPORT OF ALL THE *STATE LEADERS*...
...AND WITH THE BLESSING OF THE WESTERN CHURCH...

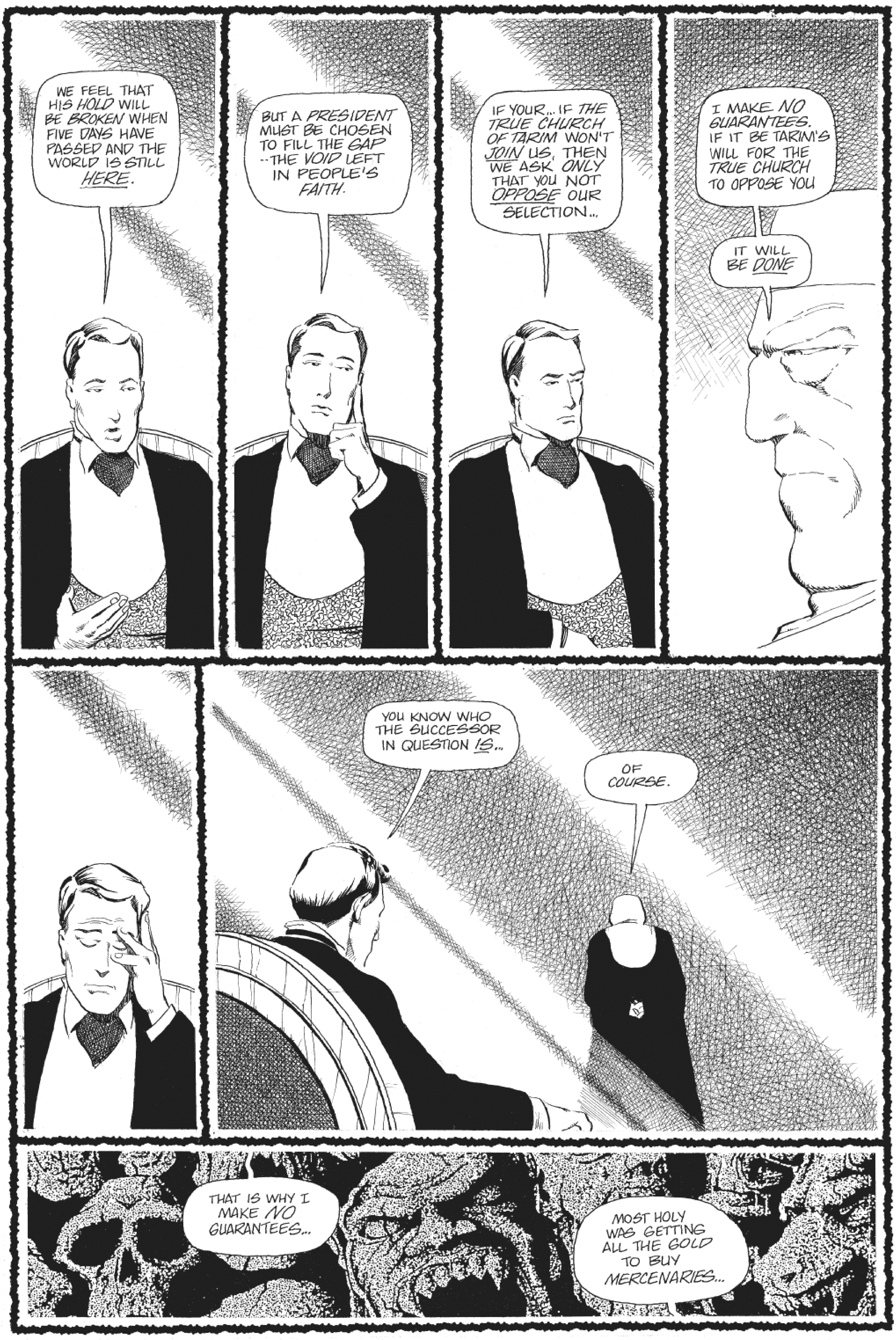

AND WHAT IF THE *LION OF SERREA* SIMPLY ANNOUNCES THAT *HE*...
IS THE NEW *PRESIDENT?*
FROM A BUSINESS STANDPOINT OR A POLITICAL STANDPOINT
I THINK YOU COULD GET FULL APPROVAL ...
BUT THE *PEOPLE,* UNFORTUNATELY BELIEVE IN *CEREBUS*
YOU WANT ME TO MAKE HIM ***PRESIDENT?*** *IF THAT'S WHAT YOU'RE SAYING YOU CAN....*
NO NO NO
BISHOP POWERS. *PLEASE.*
THAT'S NOT WHAT I'M SAYING AT ALL.
WHAT KIND OF A *"GREAT DREAM"* IS *THAT?*

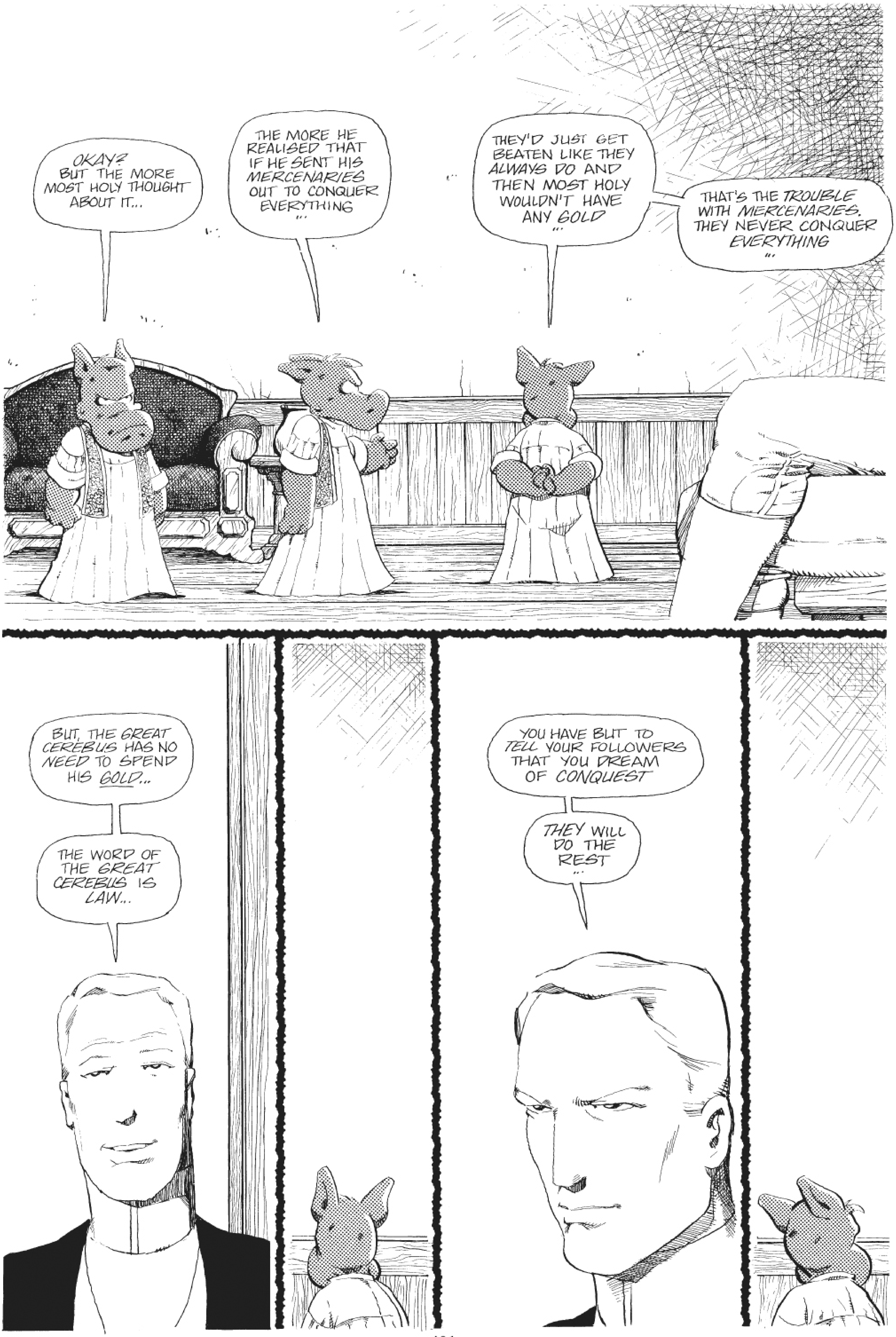

IF THE WORLD IS *DESTROYED*, EVERYONE WILL BE *DEAD*...
THERE WON'T BE ANY *TAVERNS* EVEN...
THAT IS *TRUE.*
BUT SINCE YOU ARE THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN BRING IT ABOUT
YOU ARE THE *ONLY* ONE WHO CAN DECIDE IF IT IS *NECESSARY.*
HOW CAN DESTROYING THE WORLD BE *NECESSARY?* ALL MOST HOLY WANTS TO DO IS *SCARE* PEOPLE INTO GIVING HIM *GOLD*...
AMAZING! WONDERFUL! WE ARE ALL, OF COURSE, WAITING TO SEE WHAT YOU *DO* WITH THE GOLD ...
DO WITH IT? MOST HOLY ISN'T GOING TO DO *ANYTHING* WITH IT. MOST HOLY IS GOING TO *KEEP* IT... IT'S MOST HOLY'S *GOLD*
A WONDERFUL PLAN. A *MIRACULOUS* PLAN

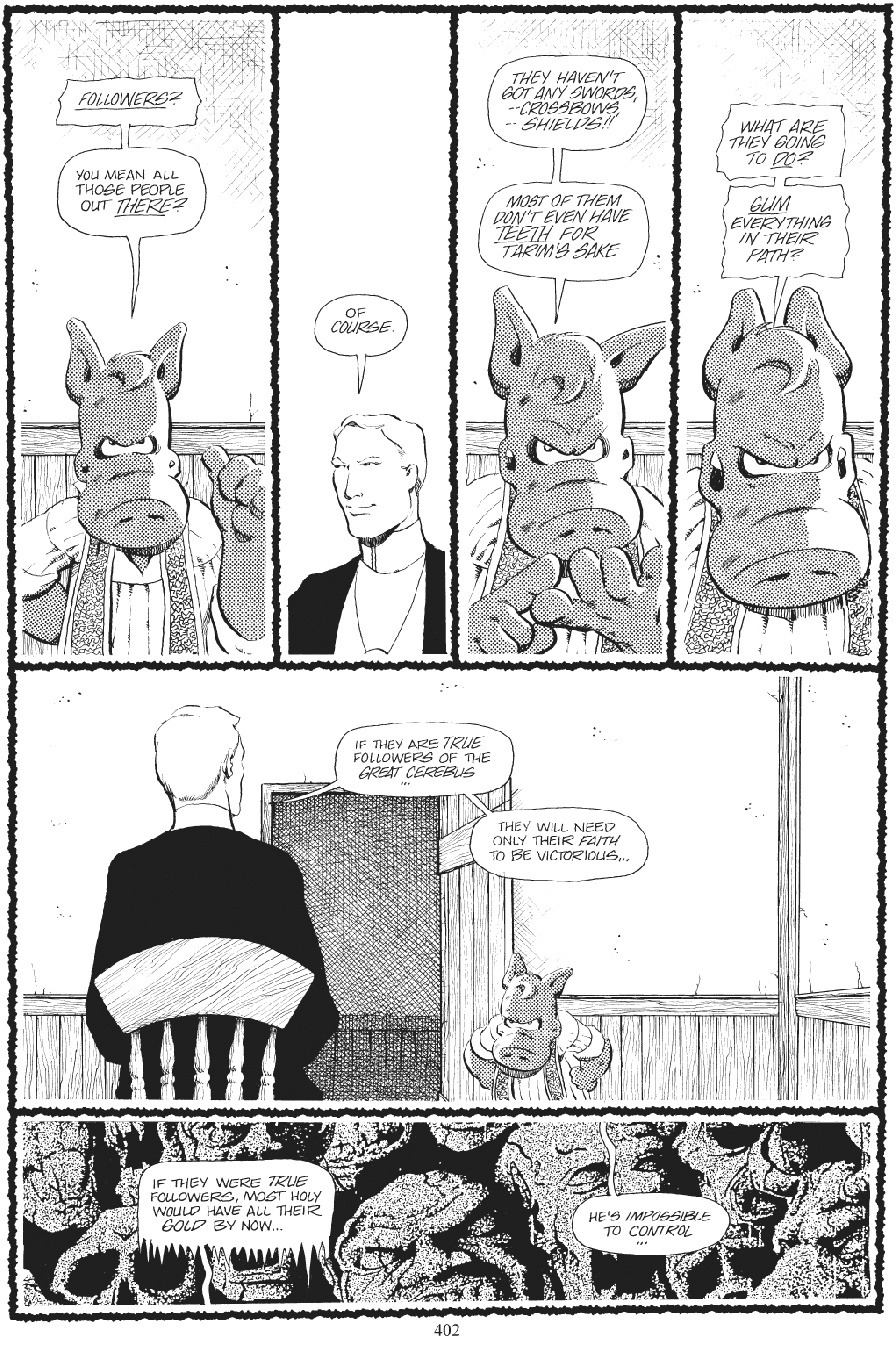

IT'S A STUPID PLAN!
WHAT'S THE POINT OF HAVING A HOTEL FULL OF GOLD AND NOT SPENDING IT?!!
IT IS NOT FOR MERE MORTALS SUCH AS MYSELF...
...TO QUESTION THE ACTIONS OF THE GREAT CEREBUS ...
OH YEAH? WELL-- IF YOU CAN'T
IF MOST HOLY IS SO, SO
IF YOU THINK THAT...
WHAT'S NEEDED IS STABILITY ...
YOU DRIVE MOST HOLY CRAZY. DO YOU KNOW THAT?

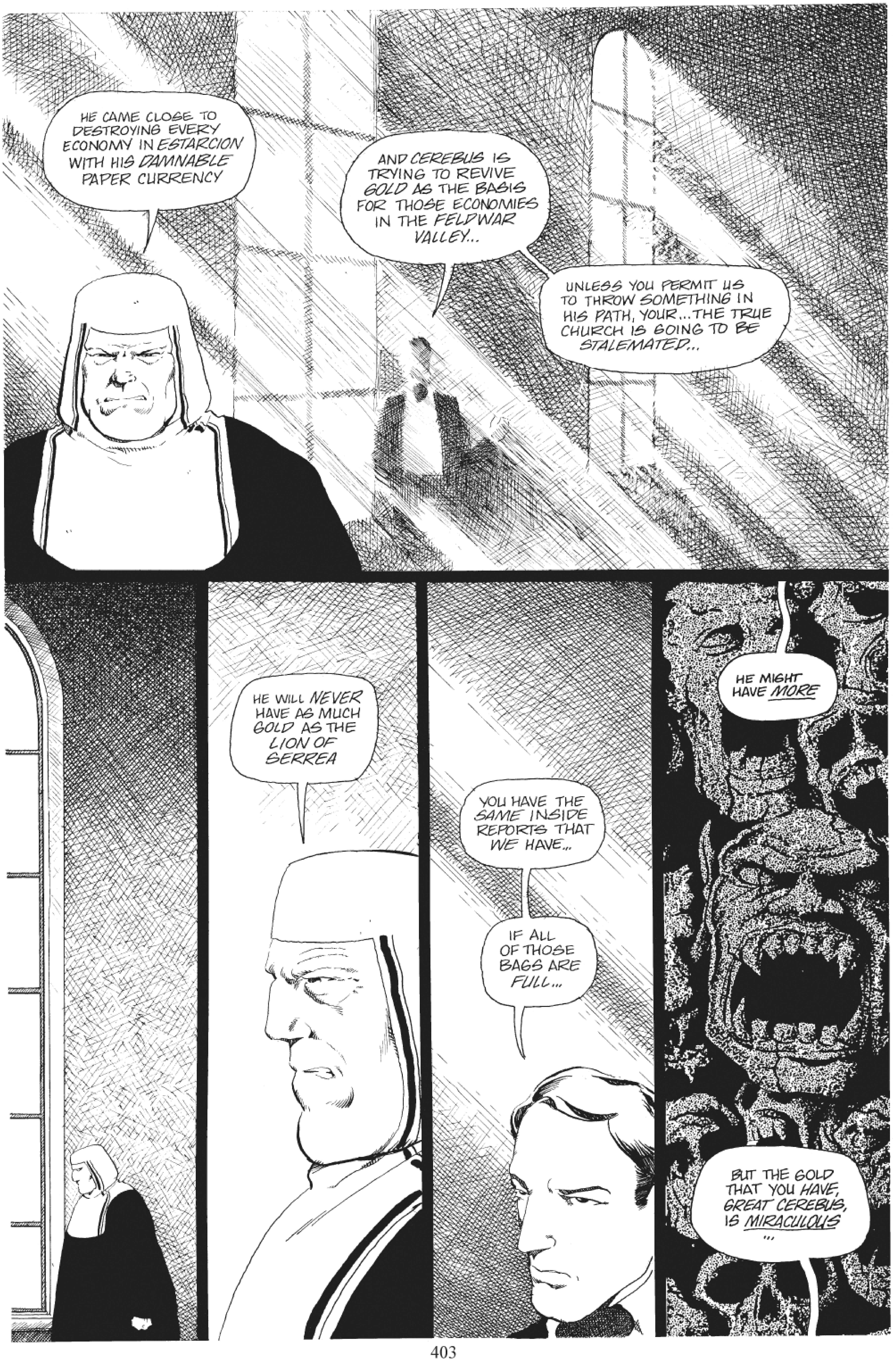

THERE IS ONLY ONE PERSON THE STATE LEADERS THE MERCHANTS AND THE BANKERS WILL UNITE BEHIND
THEY SEE A COMMON FOE IN CEREBUS AND FRANKLY...
I WOULD SAY YOUR CHURCH COULDN'T HELP BUT...

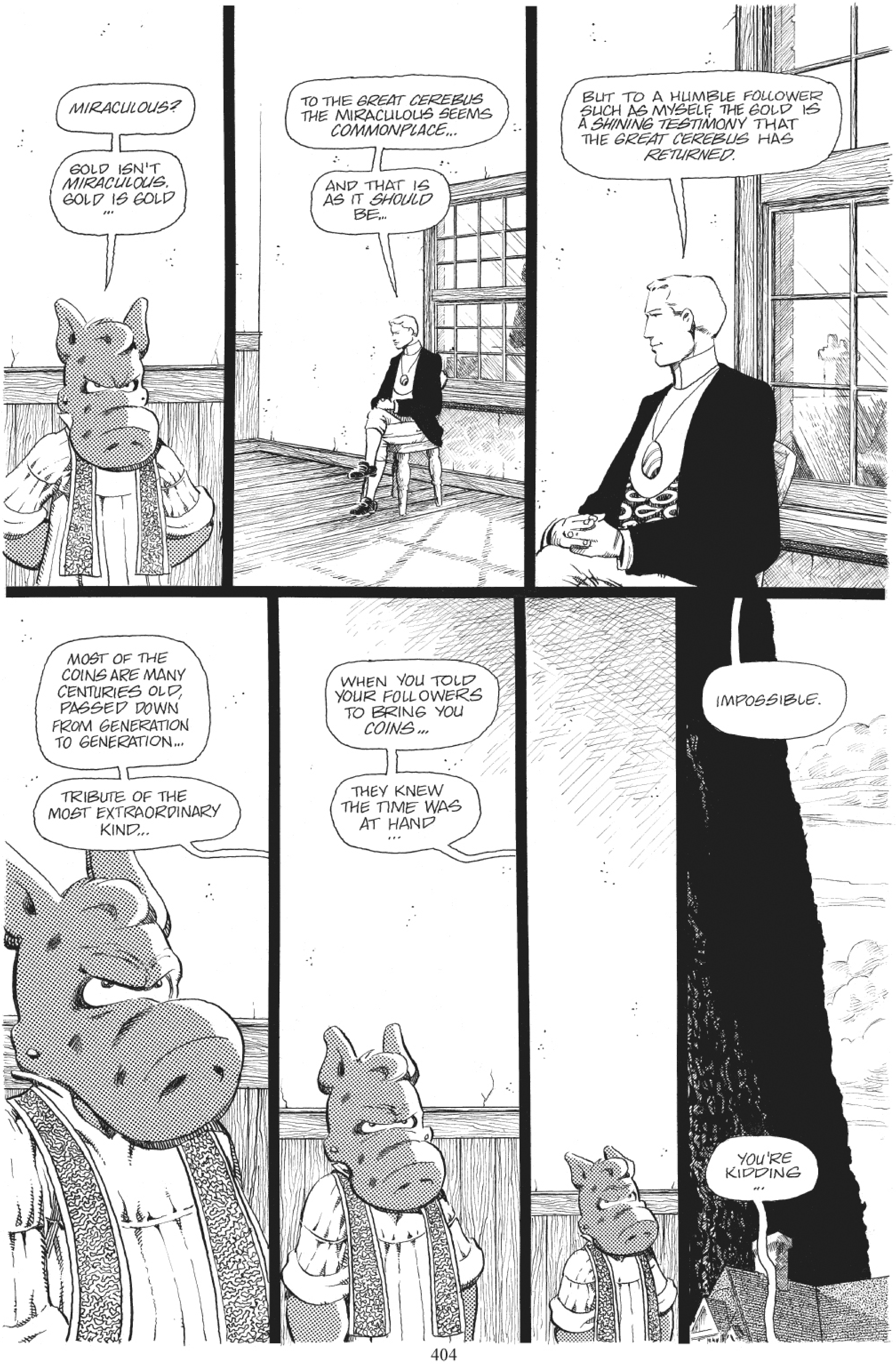

IT IS NOT MY CHURCH, FOOL! IT IS THE ONE TRUE CHURCH OF TARIM!!
OF COURSE OF COURSE --I WAS SPEAKING OF...
YOU WERE SPEAKING AS AN IDIOT WOULD...
THAT... THAT... FREAK CLINGING TO THE SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN IS LESS THAN AN ANT TO THE TRUE TARIM...
AND TARIM WILL DESTROY HIM AS SURELY AS THE SUN RISES IN THE EAST
NO MATTER WHO YOUR RIDICULOUS PRESIDENT IS!

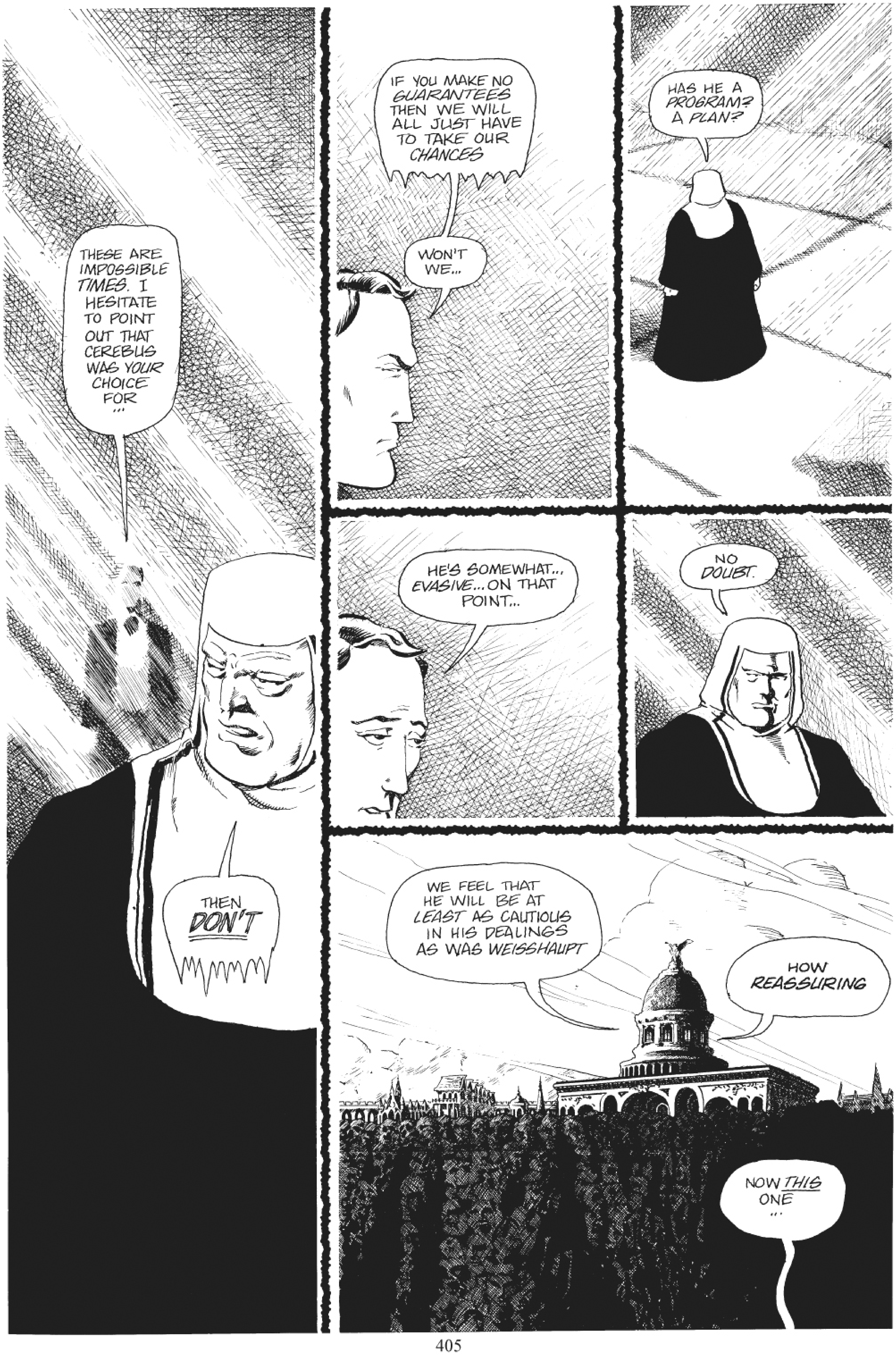

WE FEEL THAT HIS HOLD WILL BE BROKEN WHEN FIVE DAYS HAVE PASSED AND THE WORLD IS STILL HERE.
BUT A PRESIDENT MUST BE CHOSEN TO FILL THE GAP --THE VOID LEFT IN PEOPLE'S FAITH.
IF YOUR... IF THE TRUE CHURCH OF TARIM WON'T JOIN US, THEN WE ASK ONLY THAT YOU NOT OPPOSE OUR SELECTION...
I MAKE NO GUARANTEES. IF IT BE TARIM'S WILL FOR THE TRUE CHURCH TO OPPOSE YOU
IT WILL BE DONE
YOU KNOW WHO THE SUCCESSOR IN QUESTION IS...
OF COURSE.
THAT IS WHY I MAKE NO GUARANTEES...
MOST HOLY WAS GETTING ALL THE GOLD TO BUY MERCENARIES...

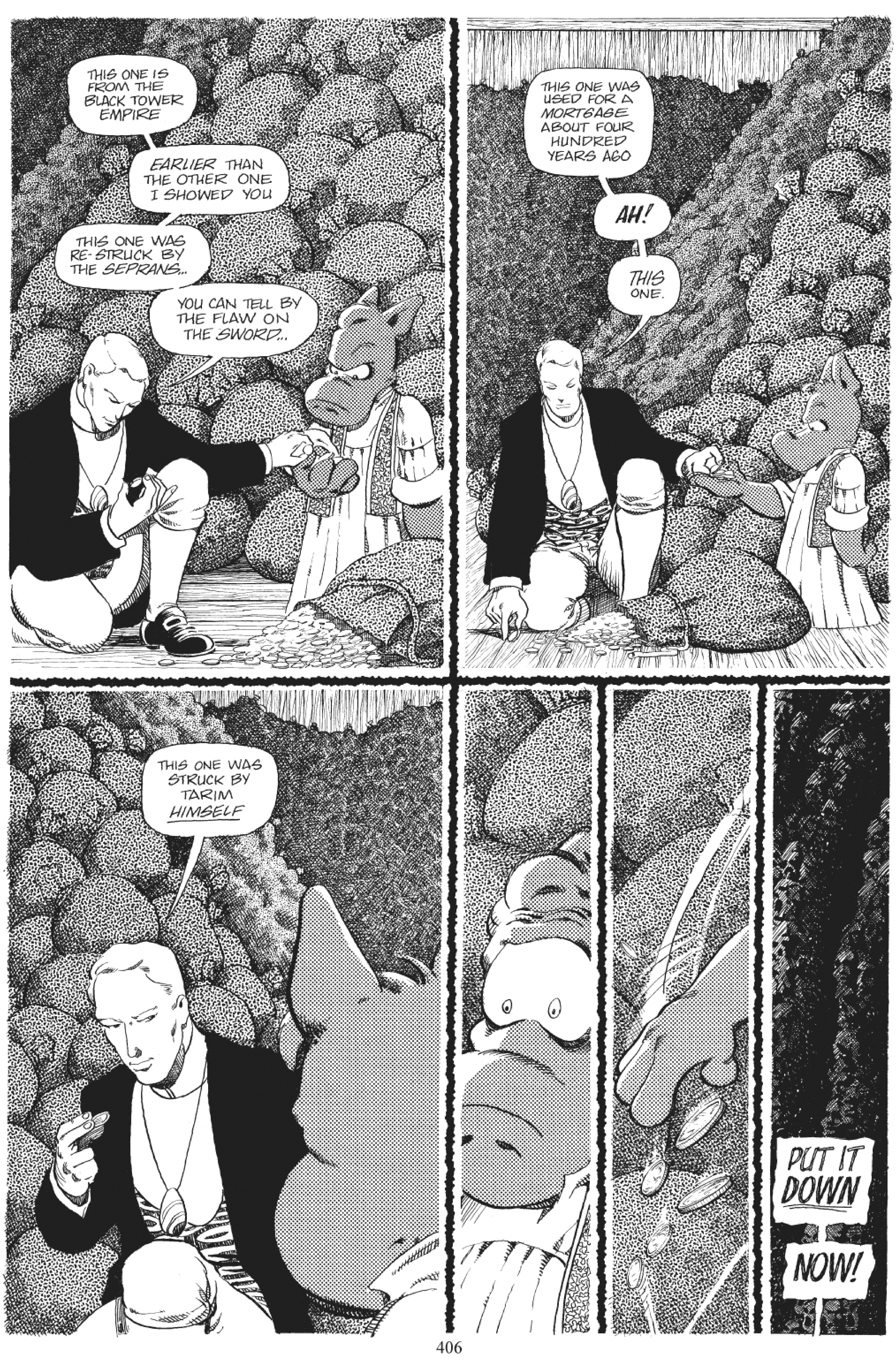

OKAY? BUT THE MORE MOST HOLY THOUGHT ABOUT IT...
THE MORE HE REALISED THAT IF HE SENT HIS MERCENARIES OUT TO CONQUER EVERYTHING ...
THEY'D JUST GET BEATEN LIKE THEY ALWAYS DO AND THEN MOST HOLY WOULDN'T HAVE ANY GOLD ...
THAT'S THE TROUBLE WITH MERCENARIES. THEY NEVER CONQUER EVERYTHING ...
BUT, THE GREAT CEREBUS HAS NO NEED TO SPEND HIS GOLD...
THE WORD OF THE GREAT CEREBUS IS LAW...
YOU HAVE BUT TO TELL YOUR FOLLOWERS THAT YOU DREAM OF CONQUEST
THEY WILL DO THE REST ...

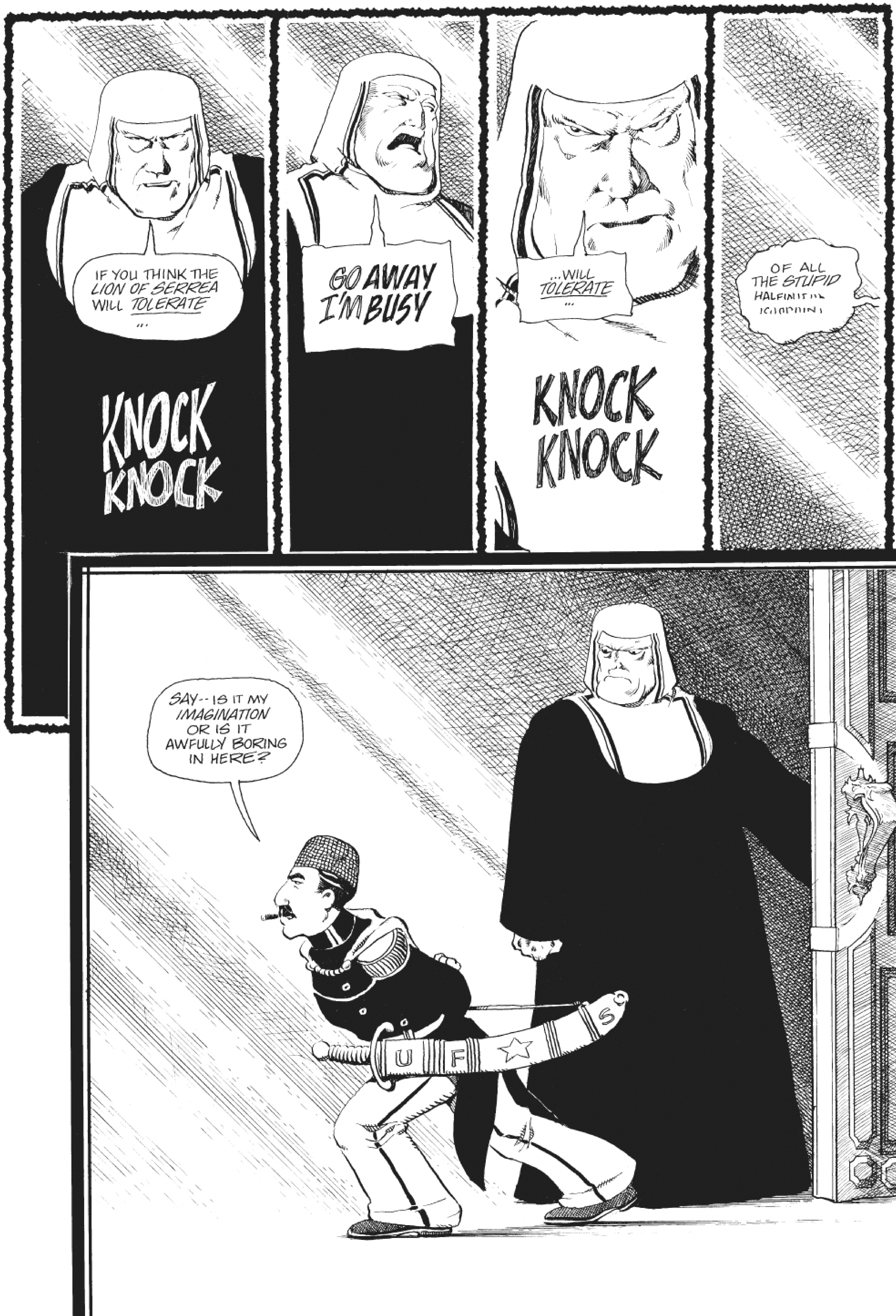

FOLLOWERS?
YOU MEAN ALL THOSE PEOPLE OUT THERE?
OF COURSE.
THEY HAVEN'T GOT ANY SWORDS, --CROSSBOWS --SHIELDS!!
MOST OF THEM DON'T EVEN HAVE TEETH FOR TARIM'S SAKE
WHAT ARE THEY GOING TO DO?
GUM EVERYTHING IN THEIR PATH?
IF THEY ARE TRUE FOLLOWERS OF THE GREAT CEREBUS ...
THEY WILL NEED ONLY THEIR FAITH TO BE VICTORIOUS...
IF THEY WERE TRUE FOLLOWERS, MOST HOLY WOULD HAVE ALL THEIR GOLD BY NOW...
HE'S IMPOSSIBLE TO CONTROL ...

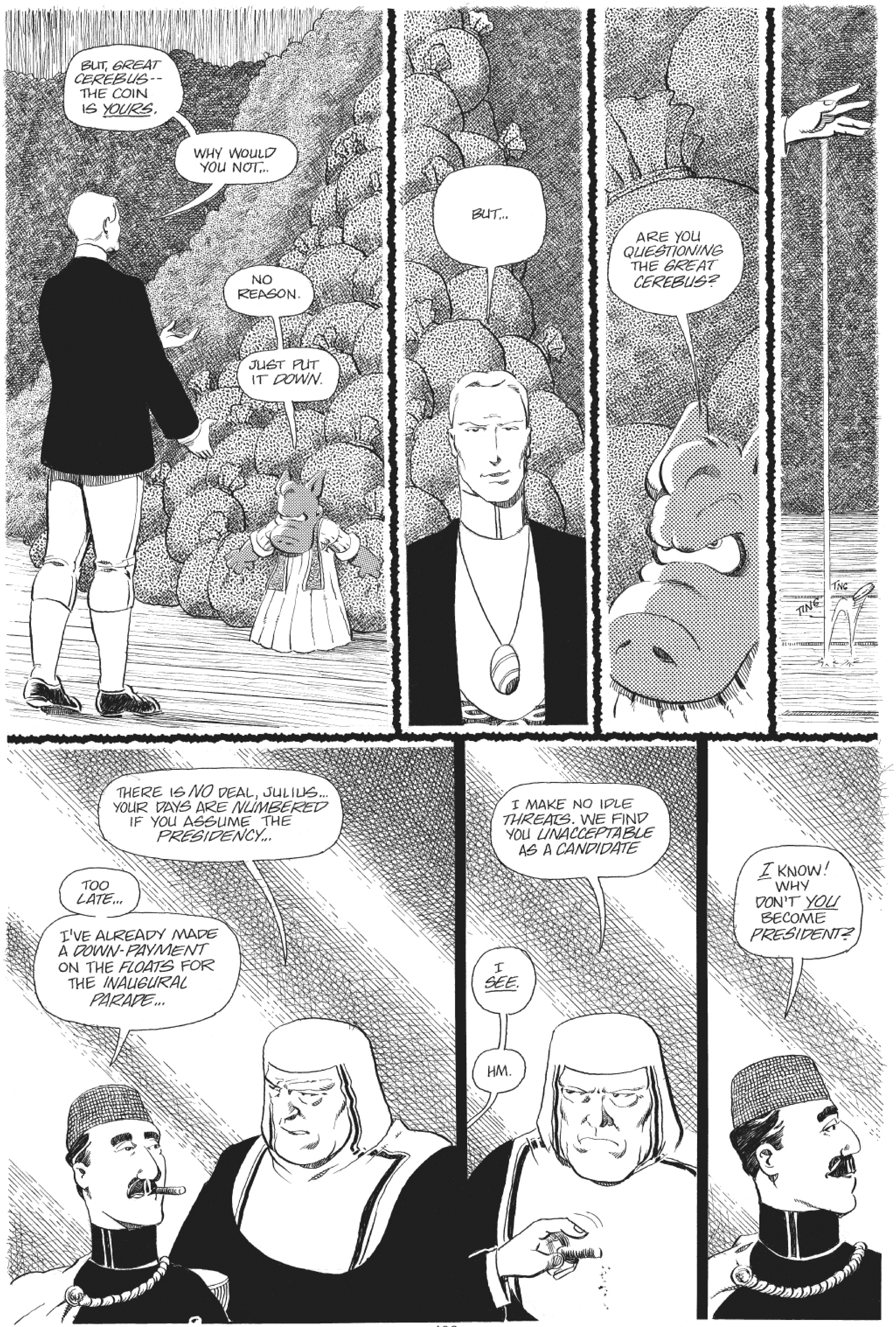

HE CAME CLOSE TO DESTROYING EVERY ECONOMY IN ESTARCION WITH HIS DAMNABLE PAPER CURRENCY
AND CEREBUS IS TRYING TO REVIVE GOLD AS THE BASIS FOR THOSE ECONOMIES IN THE FELDWAR VALLEY...
UNLESS YOU PERMIT US TO THROW SOMETHING IN HIS PATH, YOUR...THE TRUE CHURCH IS GOING TO BE STALEMATED...
HE WILL NEVER HAVE AS MUCH GOLD AS THE LION OF SERREA
YOU HAVE THE SAME INSIDE REPORTS THAT WE HAVE...
IF ALL OF THOSE BAGS ARE FULL...
HE MIGHT HAVE MORE
BUT THE GOLD THAT YOU HAVE, GREAT CEREBUS, IS MIRACULOUS ...

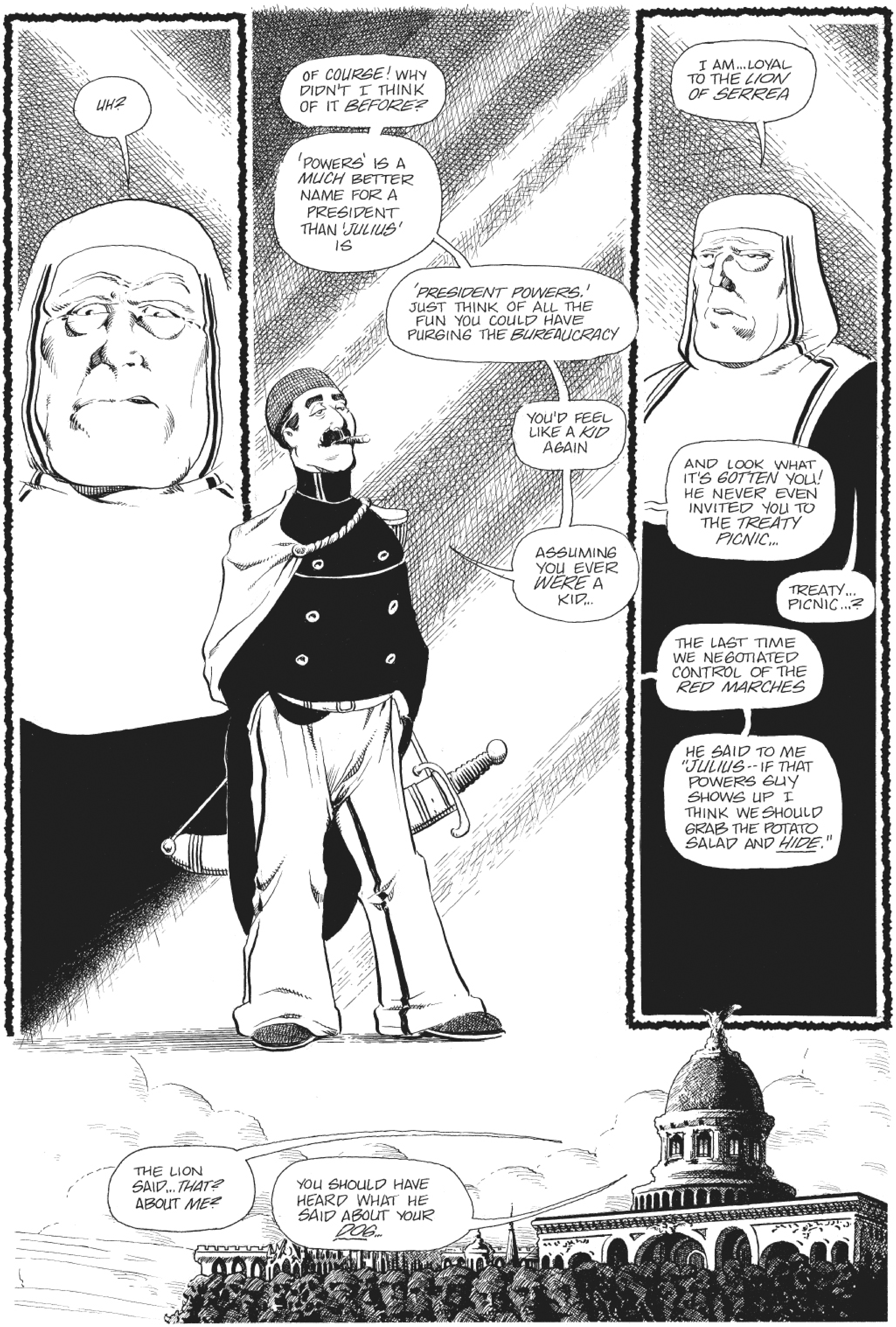

MIRACULOUS?
GOLD ISN'T MIRACULOUS. GOLD IS GOLD ...
TO THE GREAT CEREBUS THE MIRACULOUS SEEMS COMMONPLACE...
AND THAT IS AS IT SHOULD BE...
BUT TO A HUMBLE FOLLOWER SUCH AS MYSELF, THE GOLD IS A SHINING TESTIMONY THAT THE GREAT CEREBUS HAS RETURNED.
MOST OF THE COINS ARE MANY CENTURIES OLD, PASSED DOWN FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION...
TRIBUTE OF THE MOST EXTRAORDINARY KIND...
WHEN YOU TOLD YOUR FOLLOWERS TO BRING YOU COINS...
THEY KNEW THE TIME WAS AT HAND ...
IMPOSSIBLE.
YOU'RE KIDDING ...

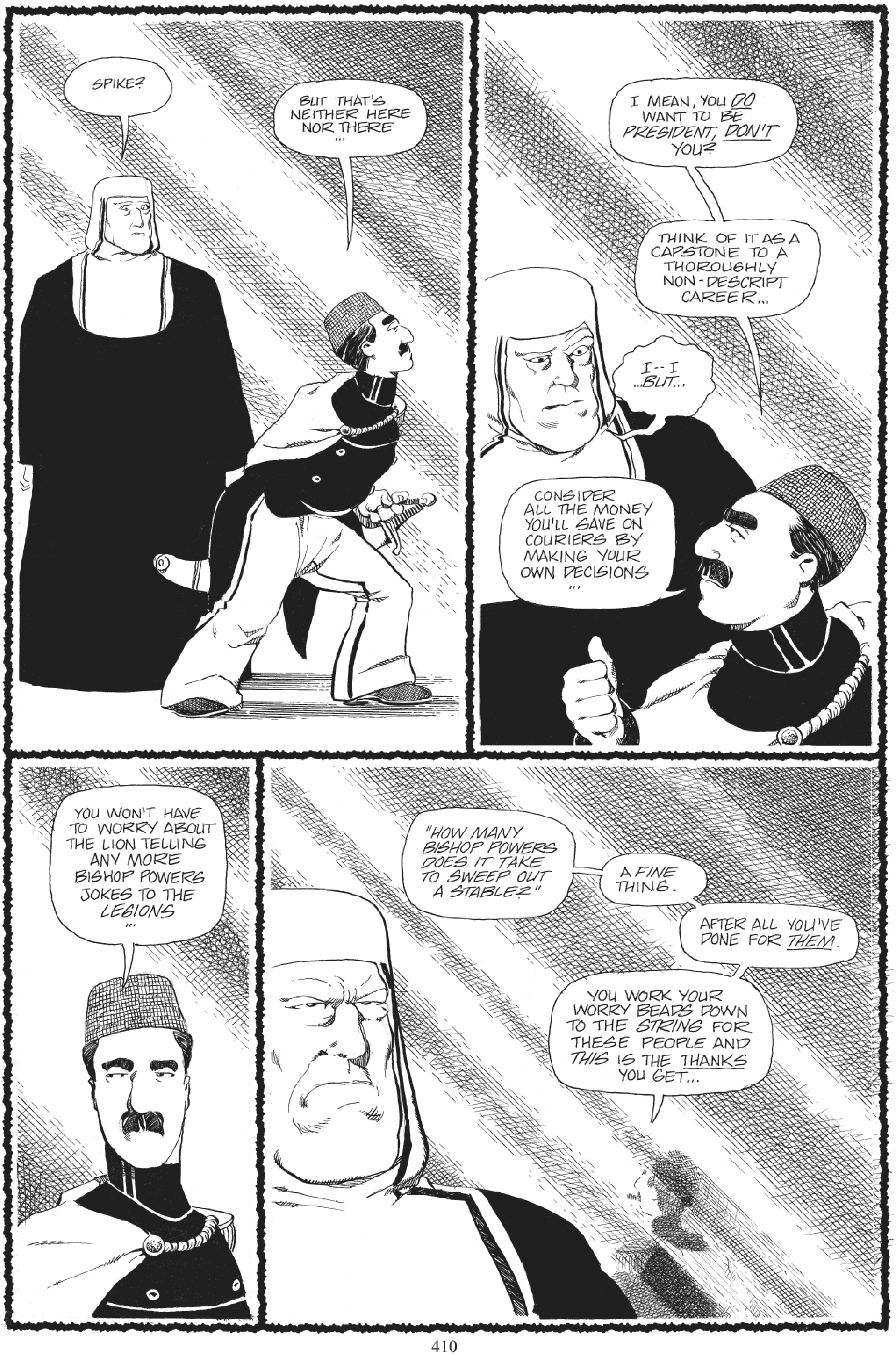

THESE ARE IMPOSSIBLE TIMES. I HESITATE TO POINT OUT THAT CEREBUS WAS YOUR CHOICE FOR ...
THEN DON'T
IF YOU MAKE NO GUARANTEES THEN WE WILL ALL JUST HAVE TO TAKE OUR CHANCES
WON'T WE...
HAS HE A PROGRAM? A PLAN?
HE'S SOMEWHAT... EVASIVE... ON THAT POINT...
NO DOUBT.
WE FEEL THAT HE WILL BE AT LEAST AS CAUTIOUS IN HIS DEALINGS AS WAS WEISSHAUPT
HOW REASSURING
NOW THIS ONE ...

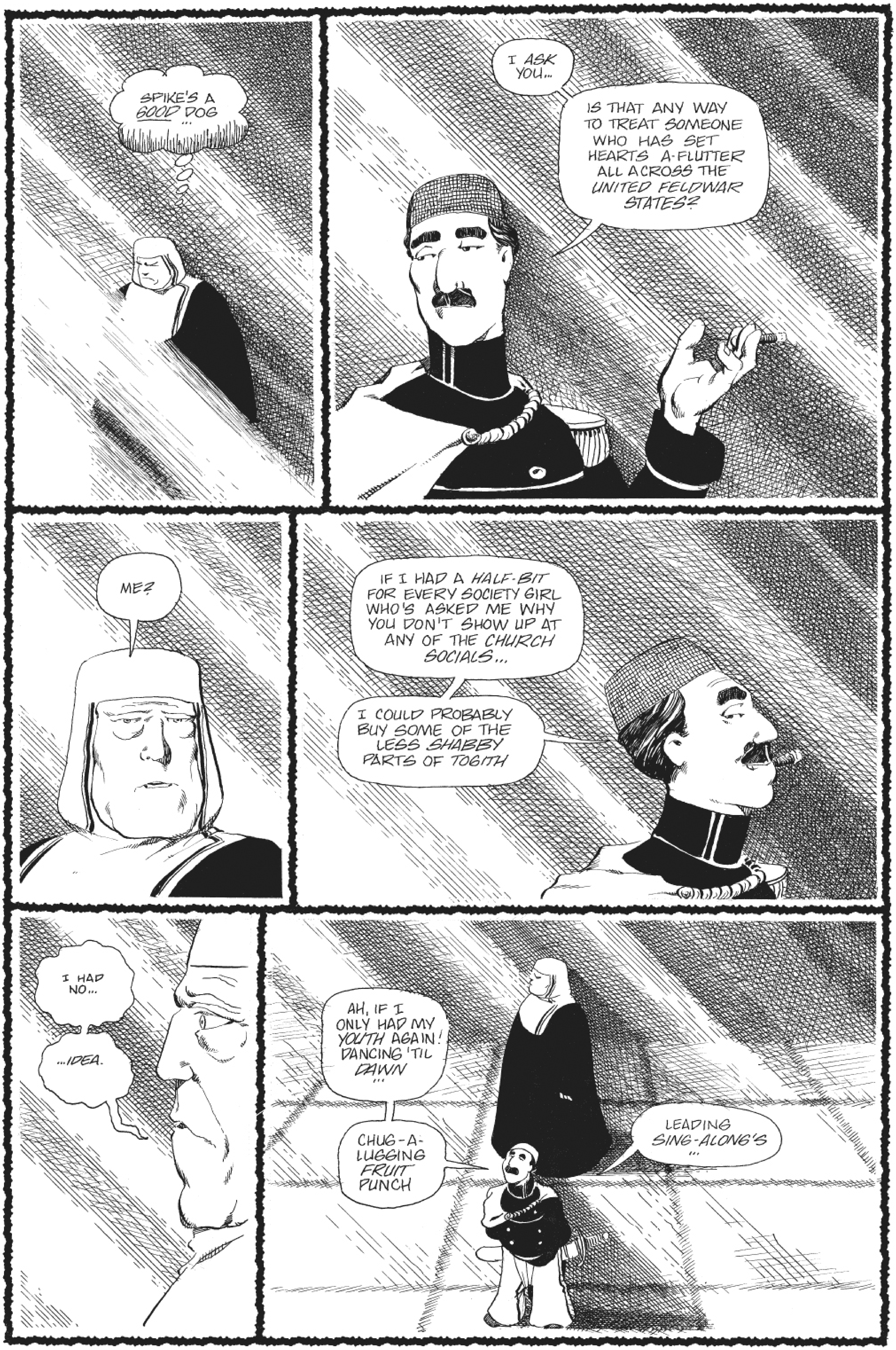

THIS ONE IS FROM THE BLACK TOWER EMPIRE
EARLIER THAN THE OTHER ONE I SHOWED YOU
THIS ONE WAS RE-STRUCK BY THE *SEPRANS*...
YOU CAN TELL BY THE FLAW ON THE *SWORD*...
THIS ONE WAS USED FOR A *MORTGAGE* ABOUT FOUR HUNDRED YEARS AGO
AH!
THIS ONE.
THIS ONE WAS STRUCK BY TARIM HIMSELF
PUT IT DOWN
NOW!

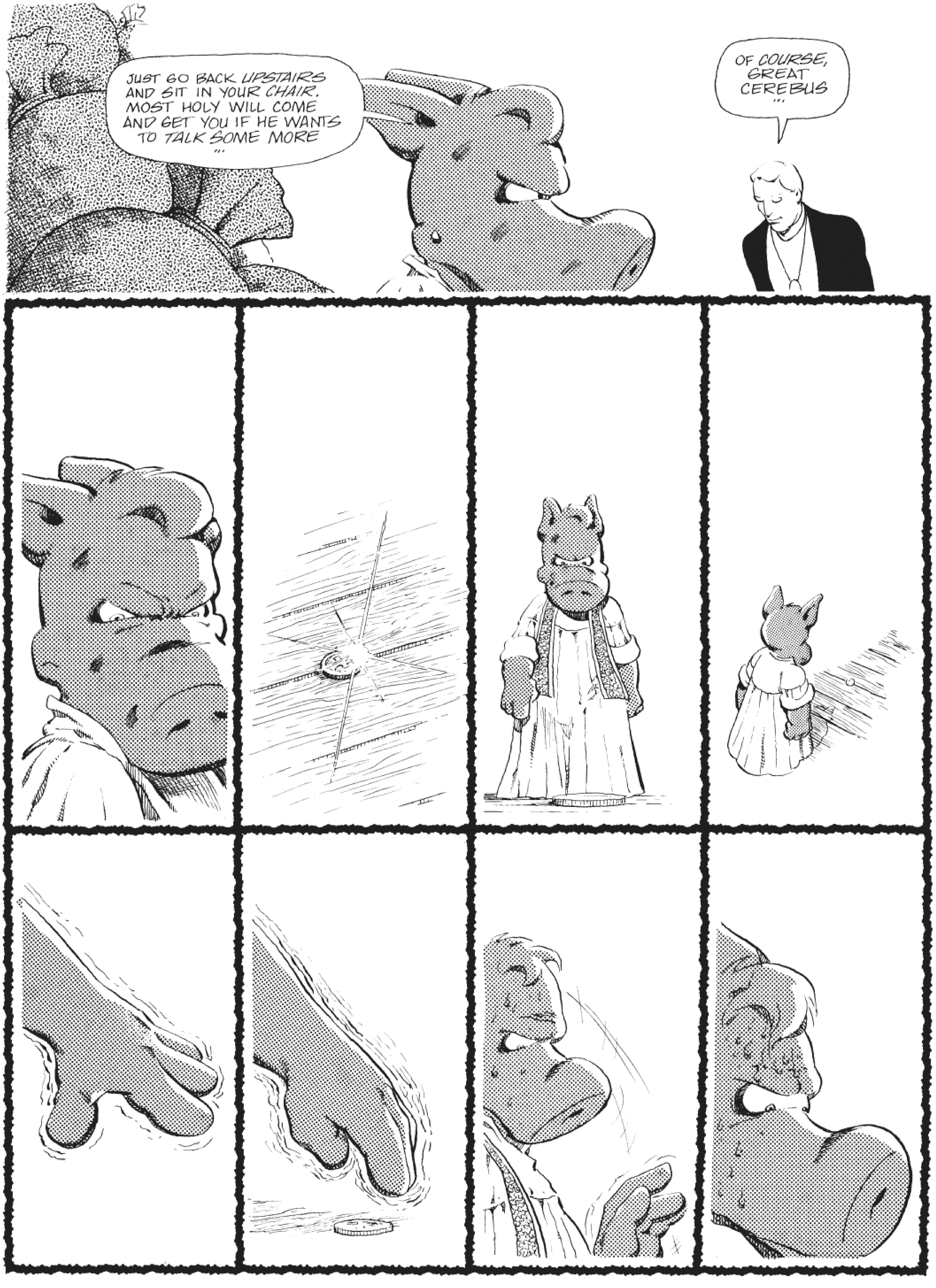

IF YOU THINK THE *LION OF SERREA* WILL TOLERATE ...
KNOCK KNOCK
GO AWAY I'M BUSY
...WILL TOLERATE ...
KNOCK KNOCK
OF ALL THE *STUPID* HALFWITTED SCOUNDRELS
SAY--IS IT MY *IMAGINATION* OR IS IT AWFULLY BORING IN HERE?
U F S


BUT, GREAT CEREBUS-- THE COIN IS YOURS.
WHY WOULD YOU NOT...
NO REASON.
JUST PUT IT DOWN.
BUT...
ARE YOU QUESTIONING THE GREAT CEREBUS?
TING
TNG
THERE IS NO DEAL, JULIUS... YOUR DAYS ARE NUMBERED IF YOU ASSUME THE PRESIDENCY...
TOO LATE...
I'VE ALREADY MADE A DOWN-PAYMENT ON THE FLOATS FOR THE INAUGURAL PARADE...
I MAKE NO IDLE THREATS. WE FIND YOU UNACCEPTABLE AS A CANDIDATE
I SEE.
HM.
I KNOW! WHY DON'T YOU BECOME PRESIDENT?

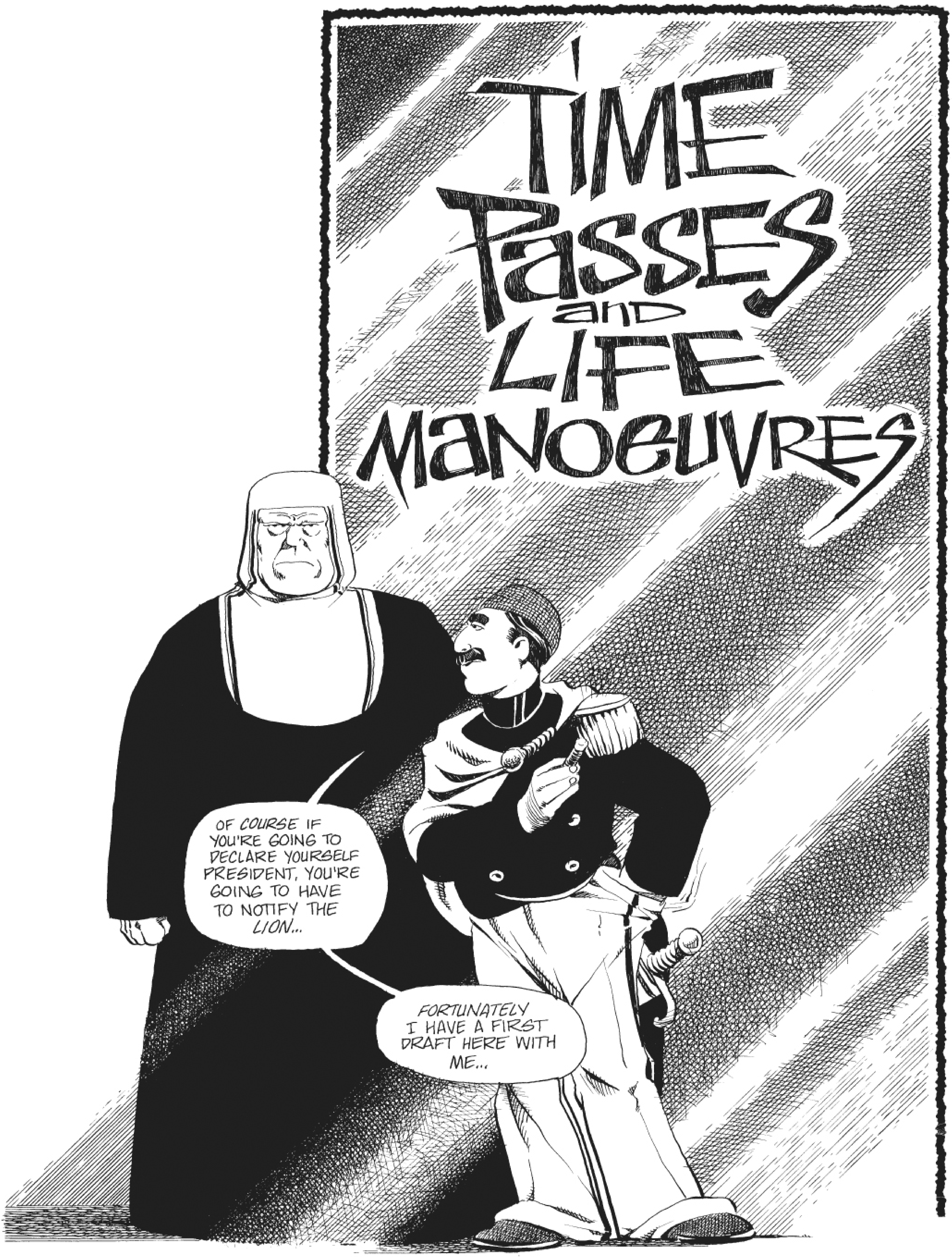

UH?
OF COURSE! WHY DIDN'T I THINK OF IT BEFORE?
'POWERS' IS A MUCH BETTER NAME FOR A PRESIDENT THAN 'JULIUS' IS
'PRESIDENT POWERS.' JUST THINK OF ALL THE FUN YOU COULD HAVE PURGING THE BUREAUCRACY
YOU'D FEEL LIKE A KID AGAIN
ASSUMING YOU EVER WERE A KID...
I AM...LOYAL TO THE LION OF SERREA
AND LOOK WHAT IT'S GOTTEN YOU! HE NEVER EVEN INVITED YOU TO THE TREATY PICNIC...
TREATY... PICNIC...?
THE LAST TIME WE NEGOTIATED CONTROL OF THE RED MARCHES
HE SAID TO ME "JULIUS--IF THAT POWERS GUY SHOWS UP I THINK WE SHOULD GRAB THE POTATO SALAD AND HIDE."
THE LION SAID...THAT? ABOUT ME?
YOU SHOULD HAVE HEARD WHAT HE SAID ABOUT YOUR DOG...

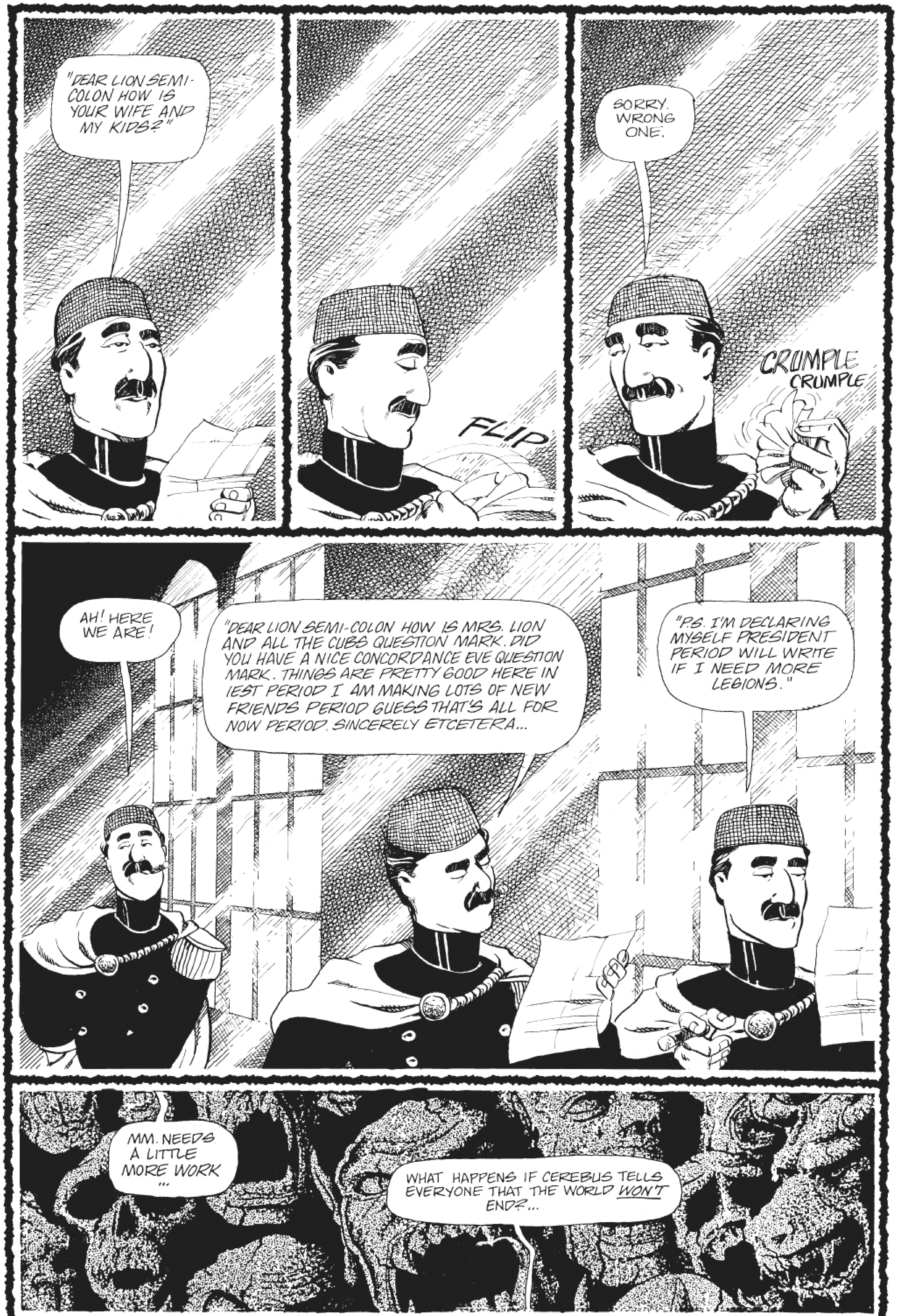

SPIKE?
BUT THAT'S NEITHER HERE NOR THERE ...
I MEAN, YOU *DO* WANT TO BE *PRESIDENT*, DON'T YOU?
THINK OF IT AS A CAPSTONE TO A THOROUGHLY NON-DESCRIPT CAREER...
I-- I ...*BUT*...
CONSIDER ALL THE MONEY YOU'LL SAVE ON COURIERS BY MAKING YOUR OWN DECISIONS ...
YOU WON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT THE LION TELLING ANY MORE BISHOP POWERS JOKES TO THE *LEGIONS* ...
"HOW MANY BISHOP POWERS DOES IT TAKE TO SWEEP OUT A STABLE?"
A FINE THING.
AFTER ALL YOU'VE DONE FOR *THEM*.
YOU WORK YOUR WORRY BEADS DOWN TO THE *STRING* FOR THESE PEOPLE AND *THIS* IS THE THANKS YOU GET...

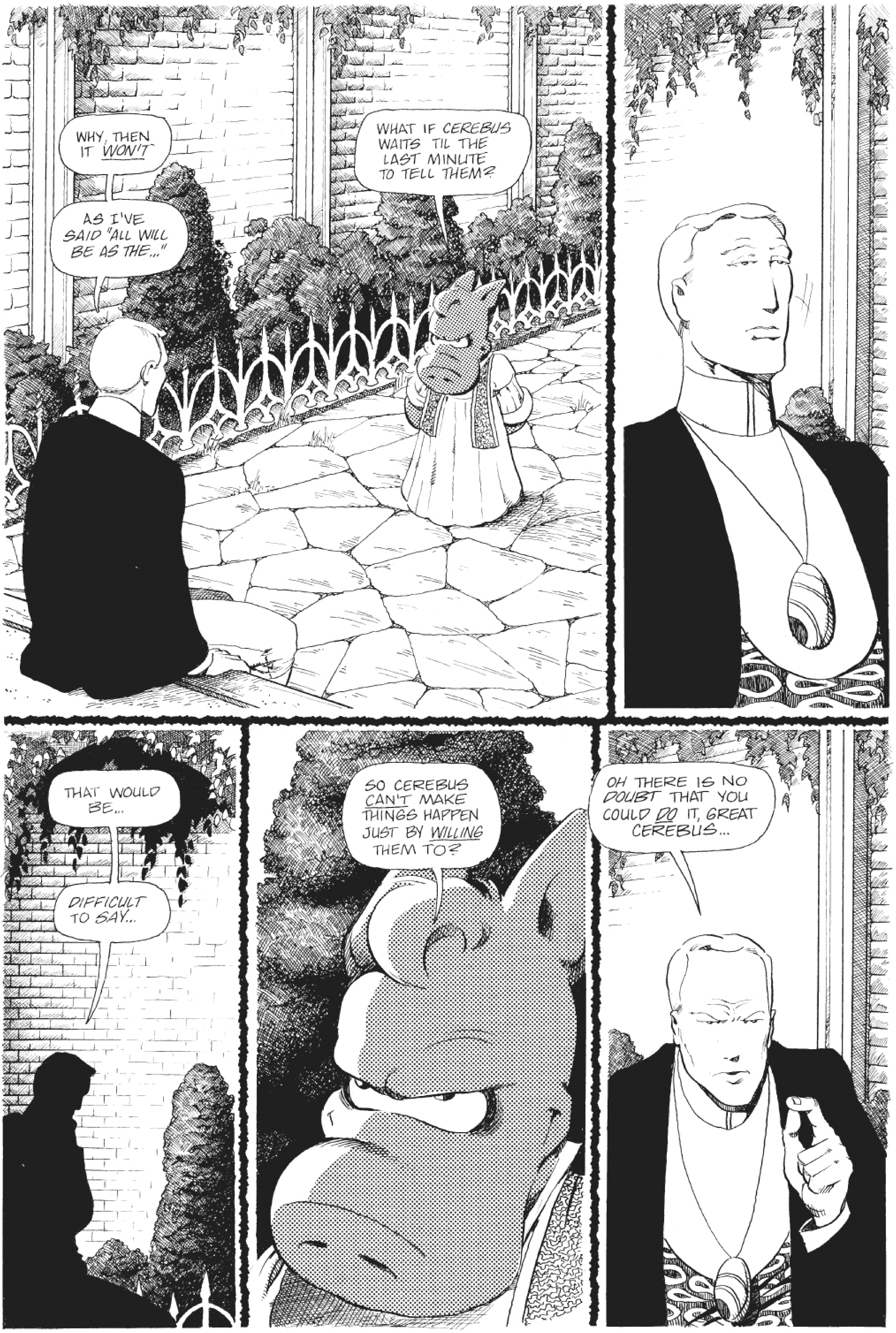

SPIKE'S A GOOD DOG ...
I ASK YOU...
IS THAT ANY WAY TO TREAT SOMEONE WHO HAS SET HEARTS A-FLUTTER ALL ACROSS THE UNITED FELDWAR STATES?
ME?
IF I HAD A HALF-BIT FOR EVERY SOCIETY GIRL WHO'S ASKED ME WHY YOU DON'T SHOW UP AT ANY OF THE CHURCH SOCIALS...
I COULD PROBABLY BUY SOME OF THE LESS SHABBY PARTS OF TOGITH
I HAD NO...
...IDEA.
AH, IF I ONLY HAD MY YOUTH AGAIN! DANCING 'TIL DAWN ...
CHUG-A-LUGGING FRUIT PUNCH
LEADING SING-ALONG'S ...

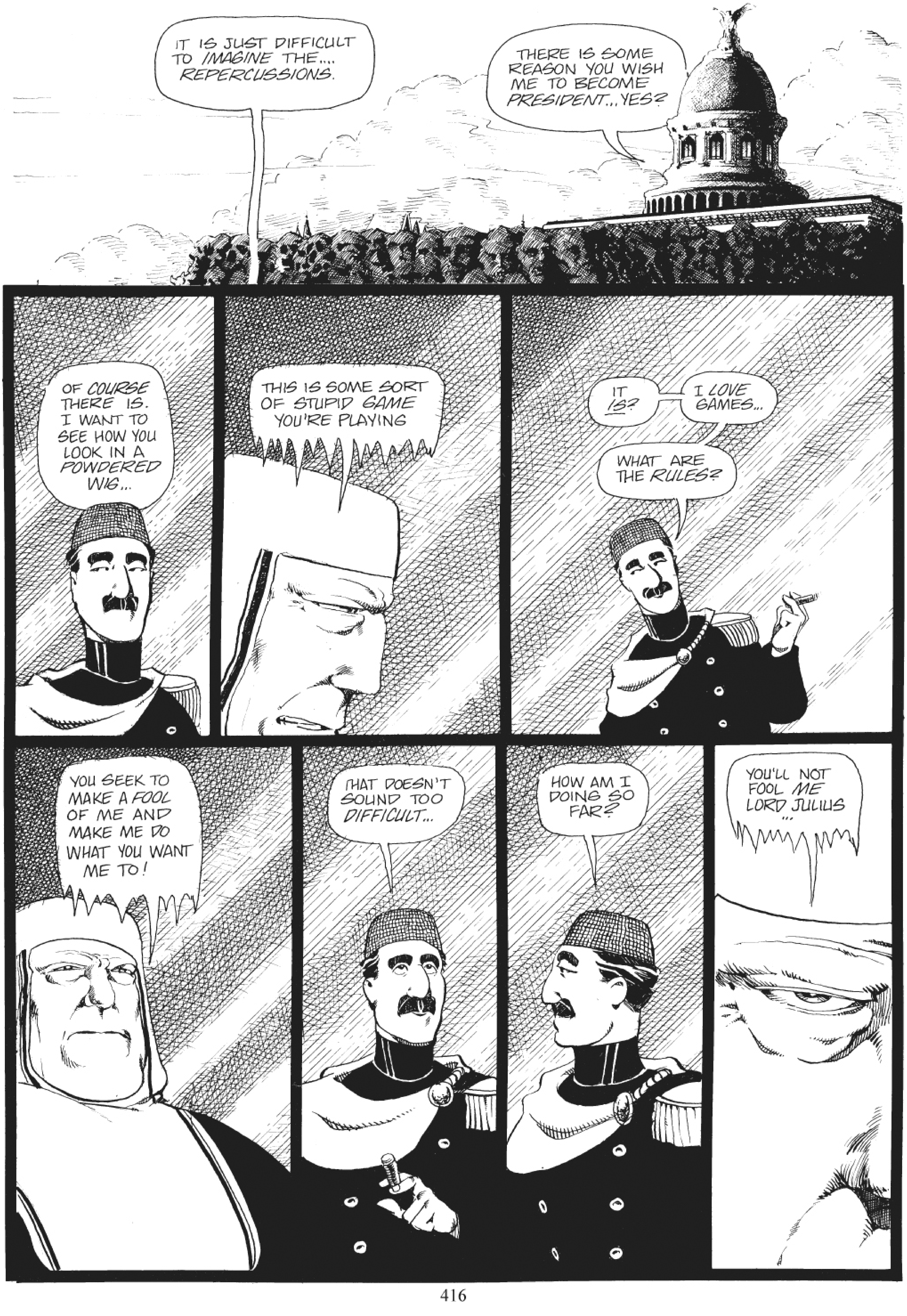

JUST GO BACK *UPSTAIRS* AND SIT IN YOUR *CHAIR*. MOST HOLY WILL COME AND GET YOU IF HE WANTS TO *TALK* SOME MORE ...
OF *COURSE*, GREAT CEREBUS ...

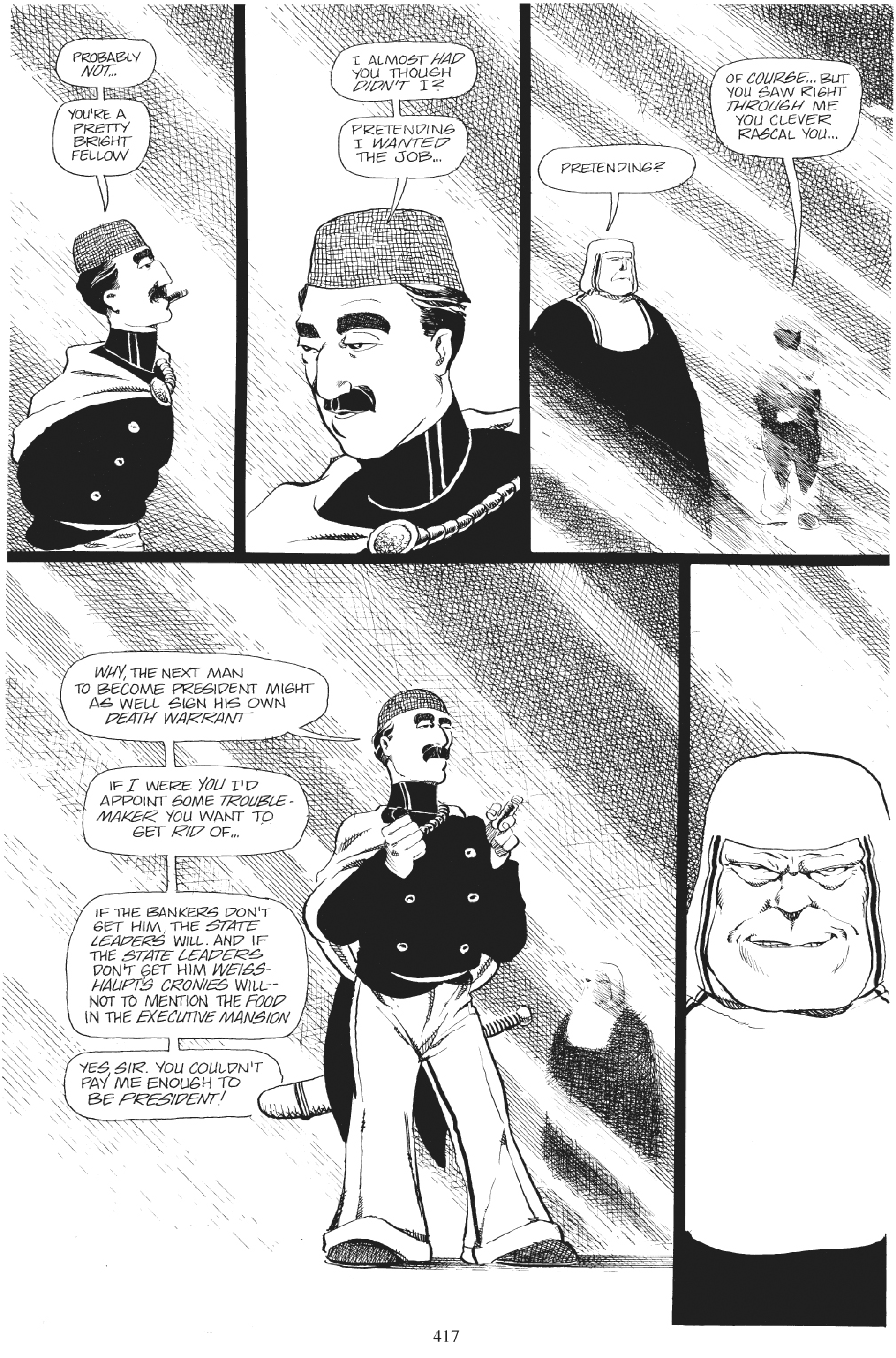
NEXT: **YOU ALWAYS FORGET ABOUT THE BEGINNING OF TIME**

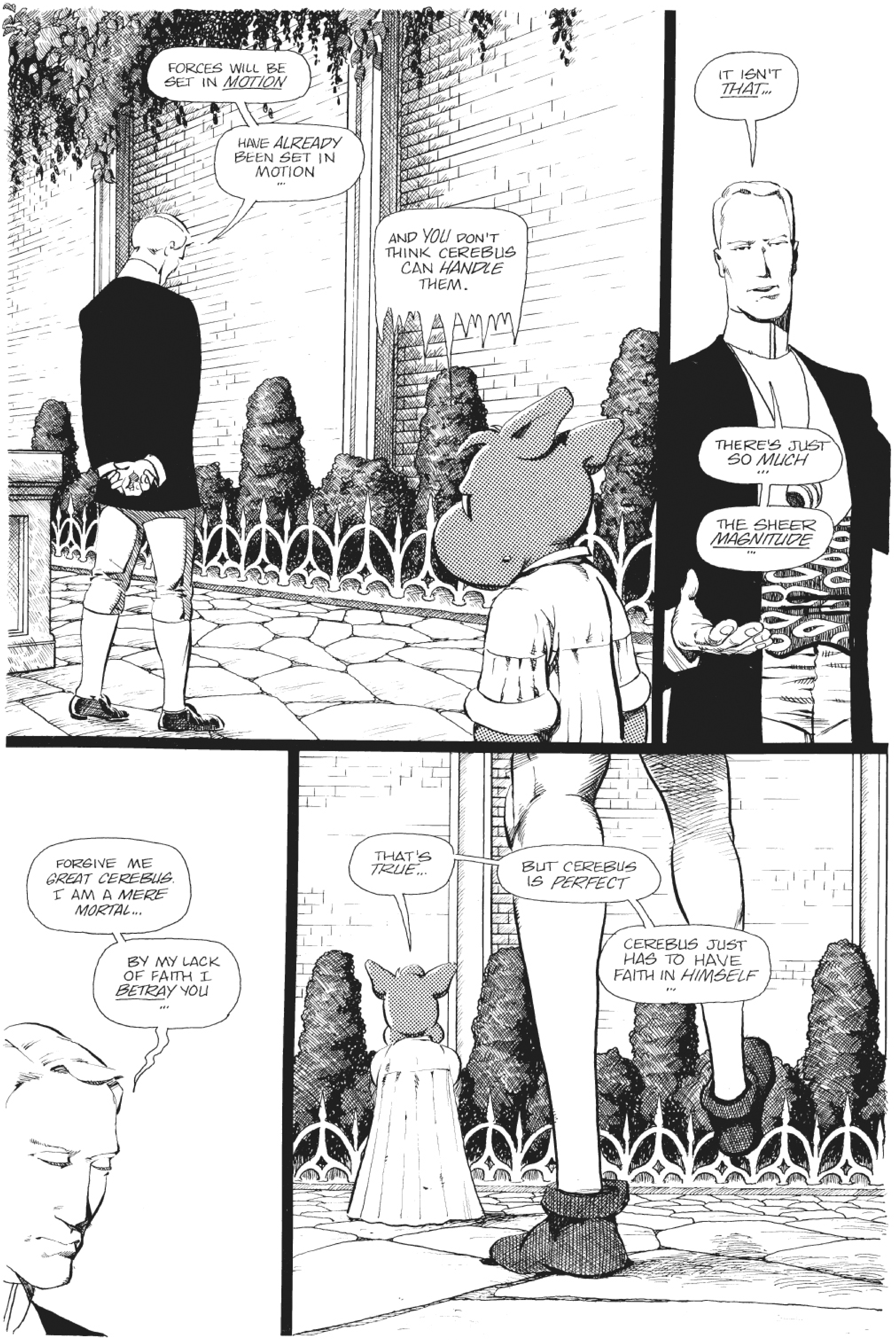

TIME PASSES and LIFE MANOEUVRES
OF COURSE IF YOU'RE GOING TO DECLARE YOURSELF PRESIDENT, YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO NOTIFY THE LION...
FORTUNATELY I HAVE A FIRST DRAFT HERE WITH ME...

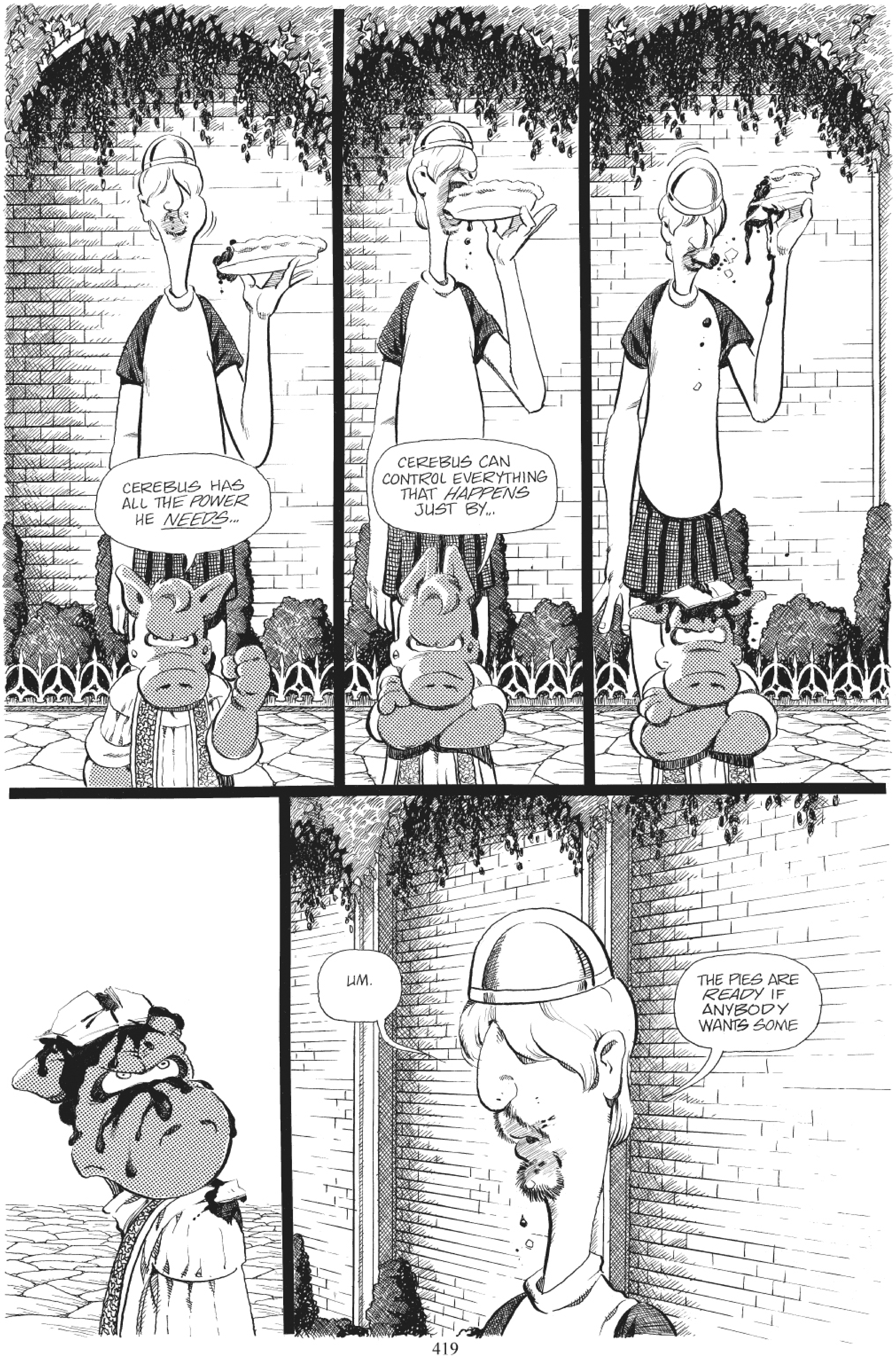

"DEAR LION SEMI-COLON HOW IS YOUR WIFE AND MY KIDS?"
FLIP
SORRY. WRONG ONE.
CRUMPLE
CRUMPLE
AH! HERE WE ARE!
"DEAR LION SEMI-COLON HOW IS MRS. LION AND ALL THE CUBS QUESTION MARK. DID YOU HAVE A NICE CONCORDANCE EVE QUESTION MARK. THINGS ARE PRETTY GOOD HERE IN IEST PERIOD I AM MAKING LOTS OF NEW FRIENDS PERIOD GUESS THAT'S ALL FOR NOW PERIOD. SINCERELY ETCETERA...
"P.S. I'M DECLARING MYSELF PRESIDENT PERIOD WILL WRITE IF I NEED MORE LEGIONS."
MM. NEEDS A LITTLE MORE WORK ...
WHAT HAPPENS IF CEREBUS TELLS EVERYONE THAT THE WORLD WON'T END?...

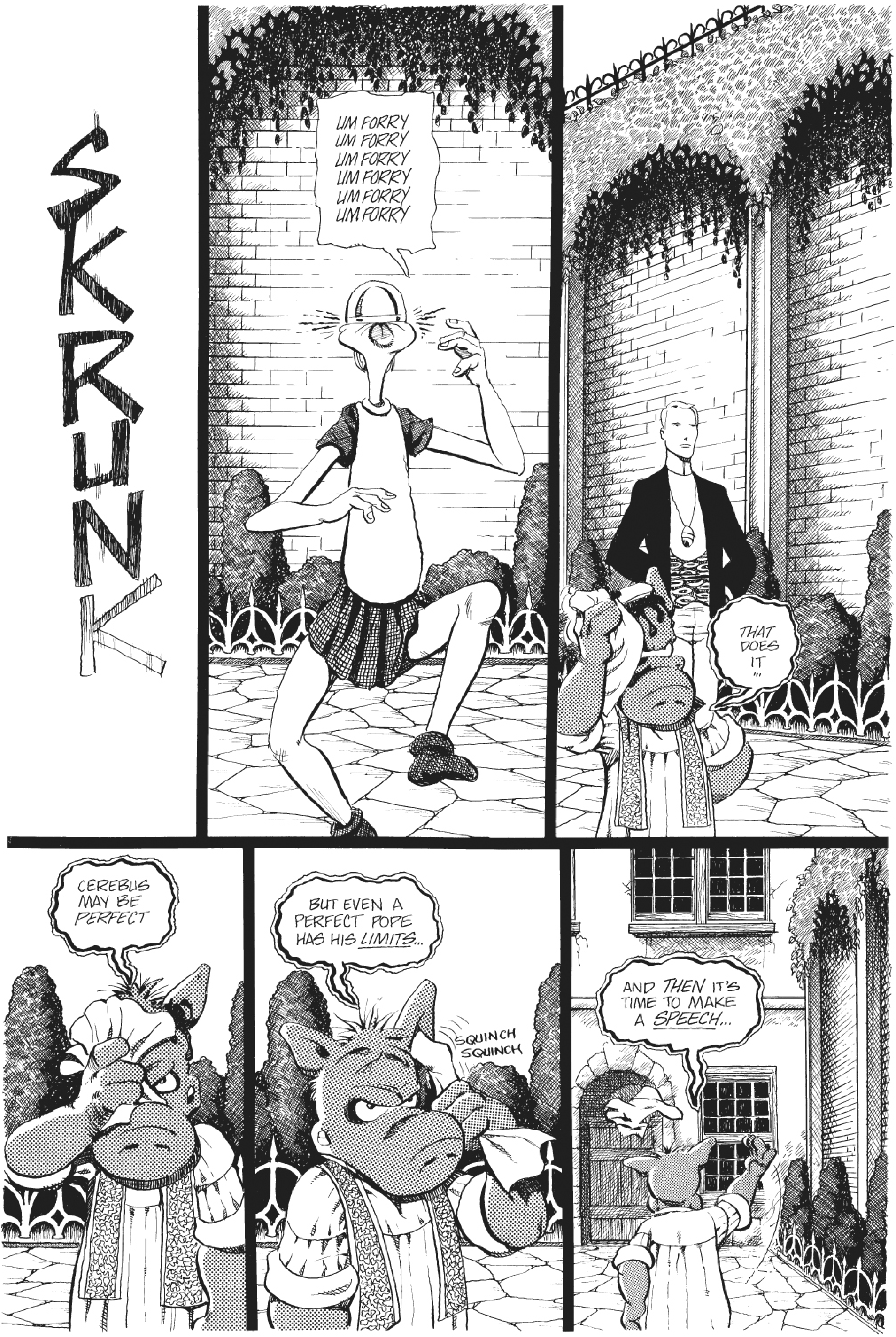

WHY, THEN IT *WON'T*
AS I'VE SAID "ALL WILL BE AS THE..."
WHAT IF *CEREBUS* WAITS TIL THE LAST MINUTE TO TELL THEM?
THAT WOULD BE...
DIFFICULT TO SAY...
SO CEREBUS *CAN'T* MAKE THINGS HAPPEN JUST BY *WILLING* THEM TO?
OH THERE IS NO *DOUBT* THAT YOU COULD *DO* IT, GREAT CEREBUS...

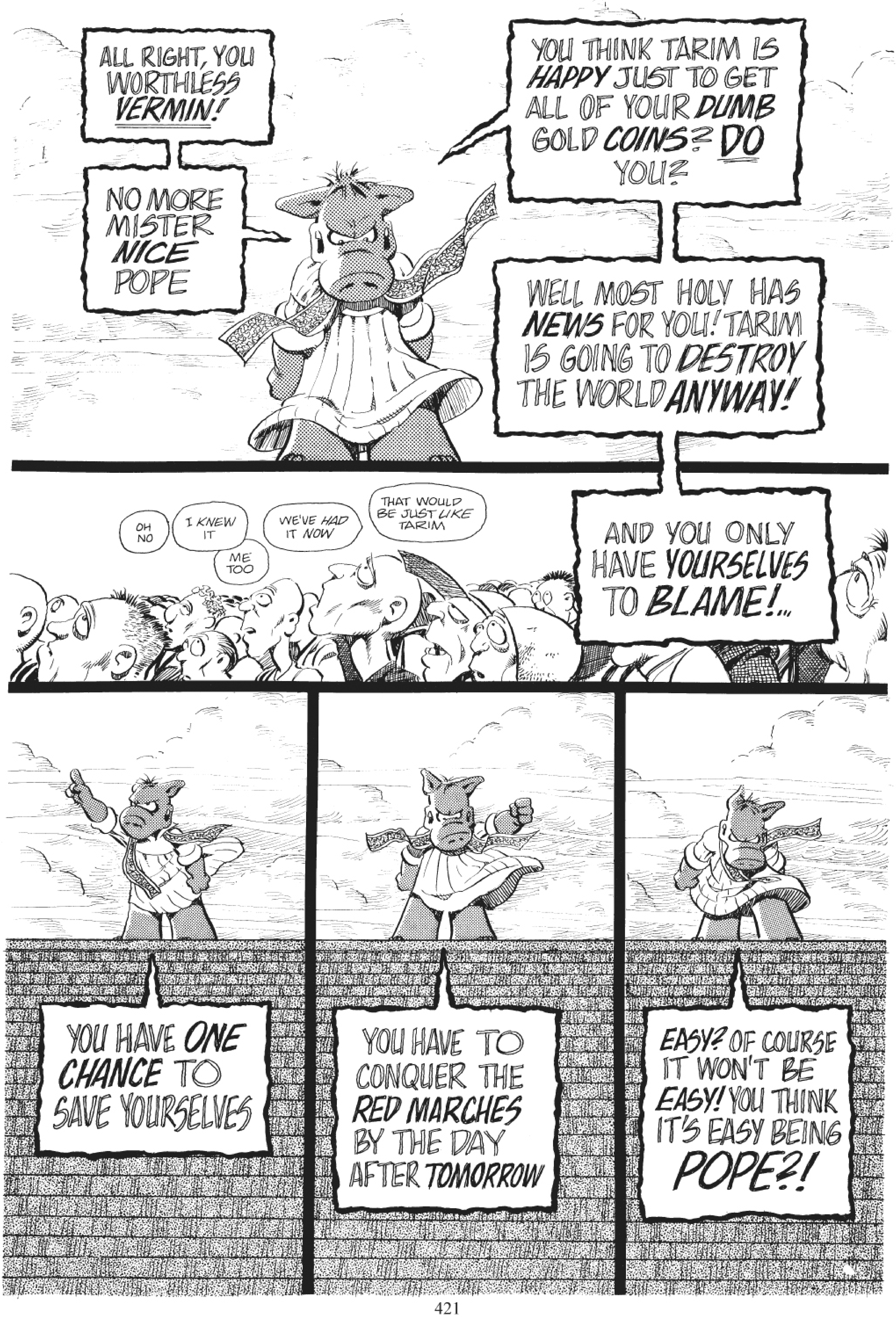

IT IS JUST DIFFICULT TO *IMAGINE* THE.... *REPERCUSSIONS*.
THERE IS SOME REASON YOU WISH ME TO BECOME *PRESIDENT*...YES?
OF *COURSE* THERE IS. I WANT TO SEE HOW YOU LOOK IN A *POWDERED WIG*...
THIS IS SOME SORT OF STUPID *GAME* YOU'RE PLAYING
IT *IS*?
I *LOVE* GAMES...
WHAT ARE THE *RULES*?
YOU SEEK TO MAKE A *FOOL* OF ME AND MAKE ME DO WHAT YOU WANT ME TO!
THAT DOESN'T SOUND TOO *DIFFICULT*...
HOW AM I DOING SO FAR?
YOU'LL NOT FOOL *ME* LORD JULIUS ...

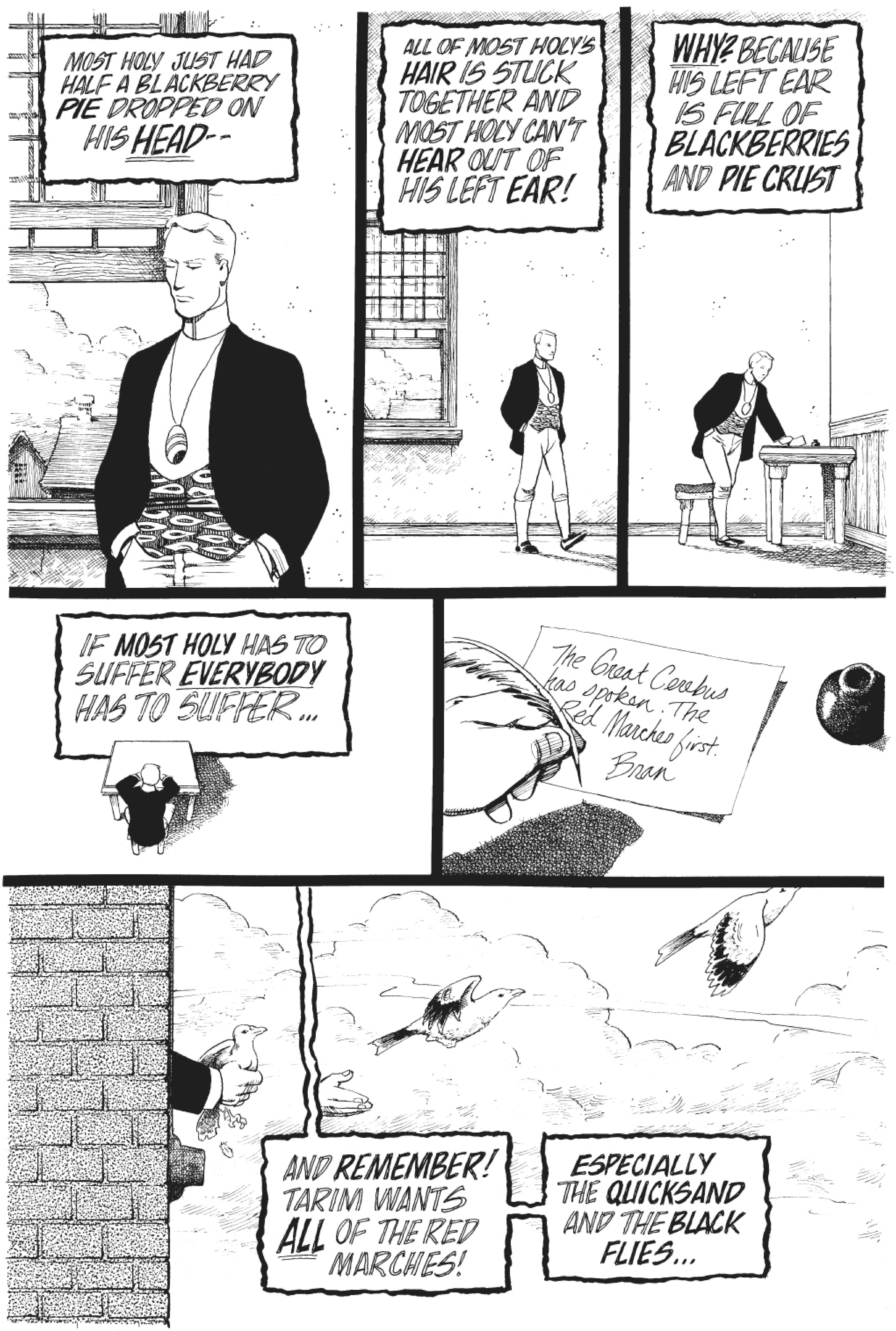

PROBABLY *NOT*...
YOU'RE A PRETTY BRIGHT FELLOW
I ALMOST *HAD* YOU THOUGH *DIDN'T* I?
PRETENDING I *WANTED* THE JOB...
PRETENDING?
OF *COURSE*... BUT YOU SAW RIGHT *THROUGH* ME YOU CLEVER RASCAL YOU...
WHY, THE NEXT MAN TO BECOME PRESIDENT MIGHT AS WELL SIGN HIS OWN *DEATH WARRANT*
IF *I* WERE *YOU* I'D APPOINT *SOME TROUBLE-MAKER* YOU WANT TO GET *RID* OF...
IF THE BANKERS DON'T GET HIM, THE *STATE LEADERS* WILL. AND IF THE *STATE LEADERS* DON'T GET HIM *WEISSHAUPT'S CRONIES* WILL--NOT TO MENTION THE *FOOD* IN THE *EXECUTIVE MANSION*
YES, SIR. YOU COULDN'T PAY ME ENOUGH TO BE *PRESIDENT*!

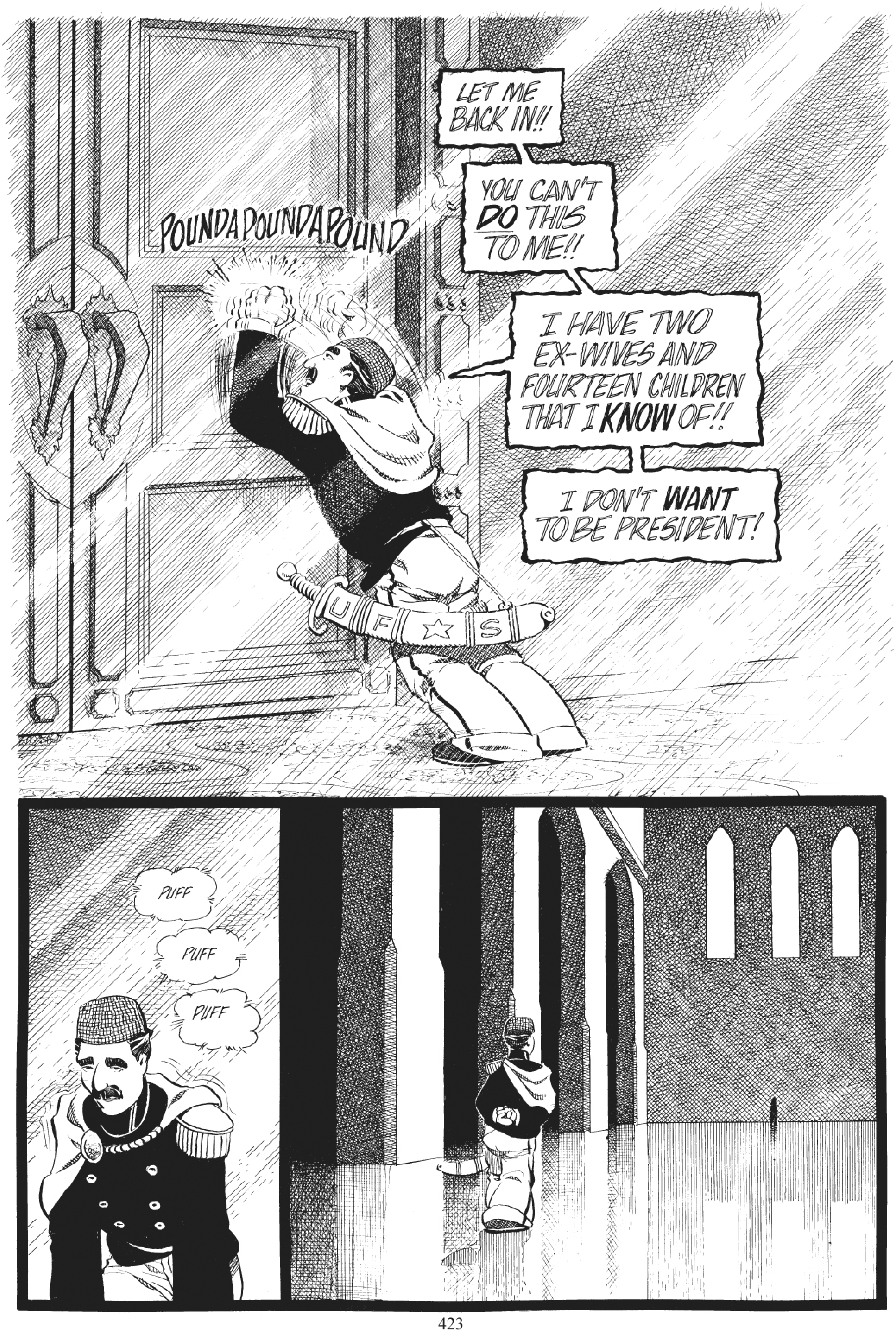

FORCES WILL BE SET IN *MOTION*
HAVE *ALREADY* BEEN SET IN MOTION ...
AND *YOU* DON'T THINK CEREBUS CAN *HANDLE* THEM.
IT ISN'T *THAT*...
THERE'S JUST SO *MUCH* ...
THE SHEER *MAGNITUDE* ...
FORGIVE ME *GREAT CEREBUS*. I AM A *MERE MORTAL*...
BY MY LACK OF FAITH I *BETRAY* YOU ...
THAT'S *TRUE*...
BUT CEREBUS IS *PERFECT*
CEREBUS JUST HAS TO HAVE FAITH IN *HIMSELF* ...

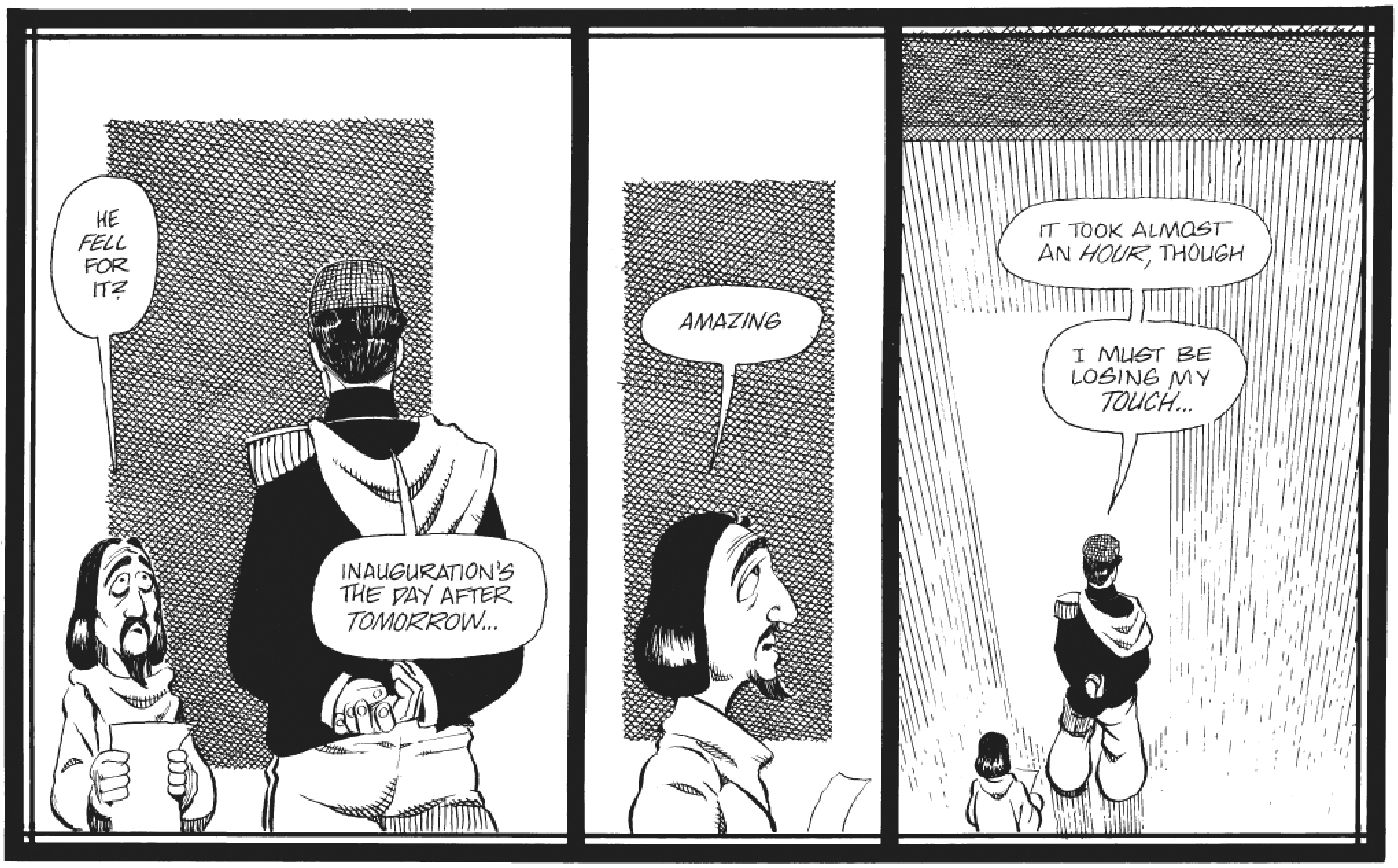

CEREBUS HAS ALL THE *POWER* HE *NEEDS*...
CEREBUS CAN CONTROL EVERYTHING THAT *HAPPENS* JUST BY...
UM.
THE PIES ARE *READY* IF ANYBODY WANTS SOME

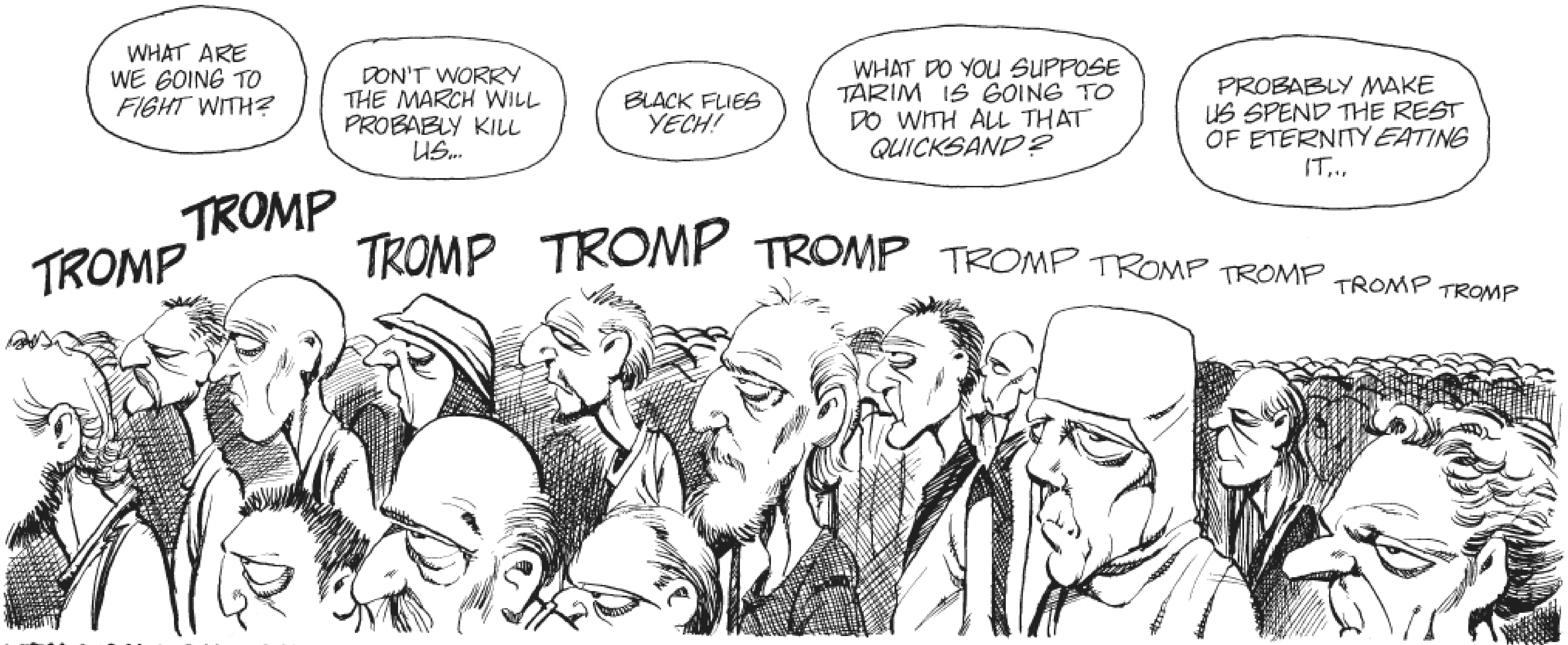

SKRUNK
UM FORRY UM FORRY UM FORRY UM FORRY UM FORRY UM FORRY
THAT DOES IT ...
CEREBUS MAY BE PERFECT
BUT EVEN A PERFECT POPE HAS HIS LIMITS...
SQUINCH SQUINCH
AND THEN IT'S TIME TO MAKE A SPEECH...

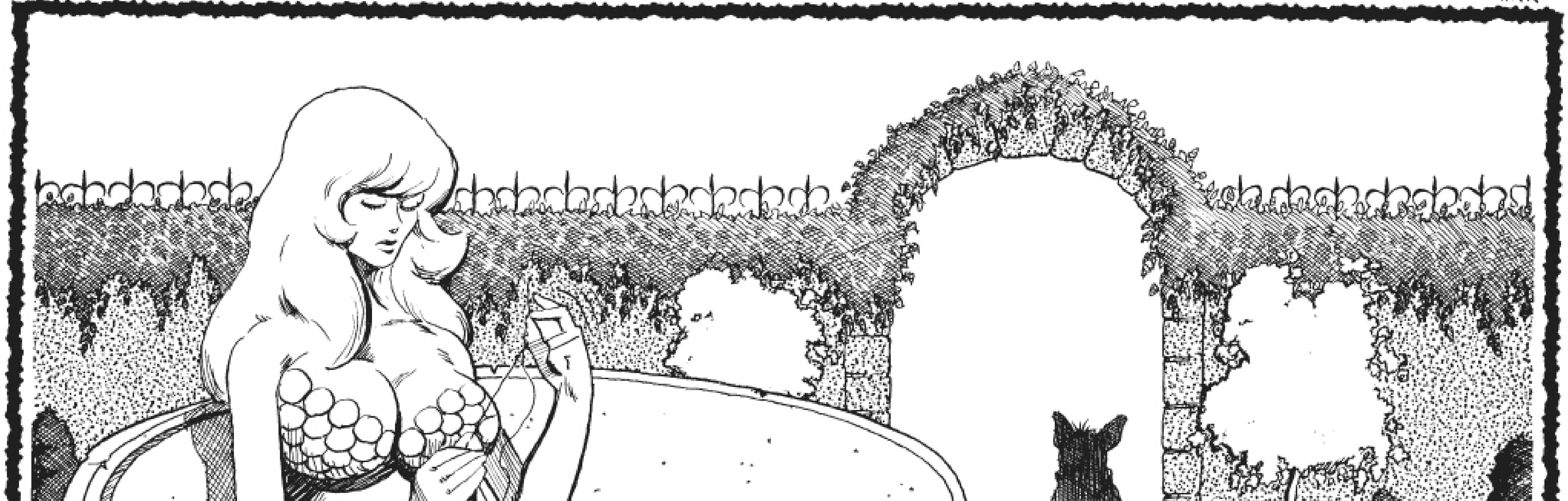

ALL RIGHT, YOU WORTHLESS VERMIN!
NO MORE MISTER NICE POPE
YOU THINK TARIM IS HAPPY JUST TO GET ALL OF YOUR DUMB GOLD COINS? DO YOU?
WELL MOST HOLY HAS NEWS FOR YOU! TARIM IS GOING TO DESTROY THE WORLD ANYWAY!
AND YOU ONLY HAVE YOURSELVES TO BLAME!...
OH NO
I KNEW IT
ME TOO
WE'VE HAD IT NOW
THAT WOULD BE JUST LIKE TARIM
YOU HAVE ONE CHANCE TO SAVE YOURSELVES
YOU HAVE TO CONQUER THE RED MARCHES BY THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW
EASY? OF COURSE IT WON'T BE EASY! YOU THINK IT'S EASY BEING POPE?!

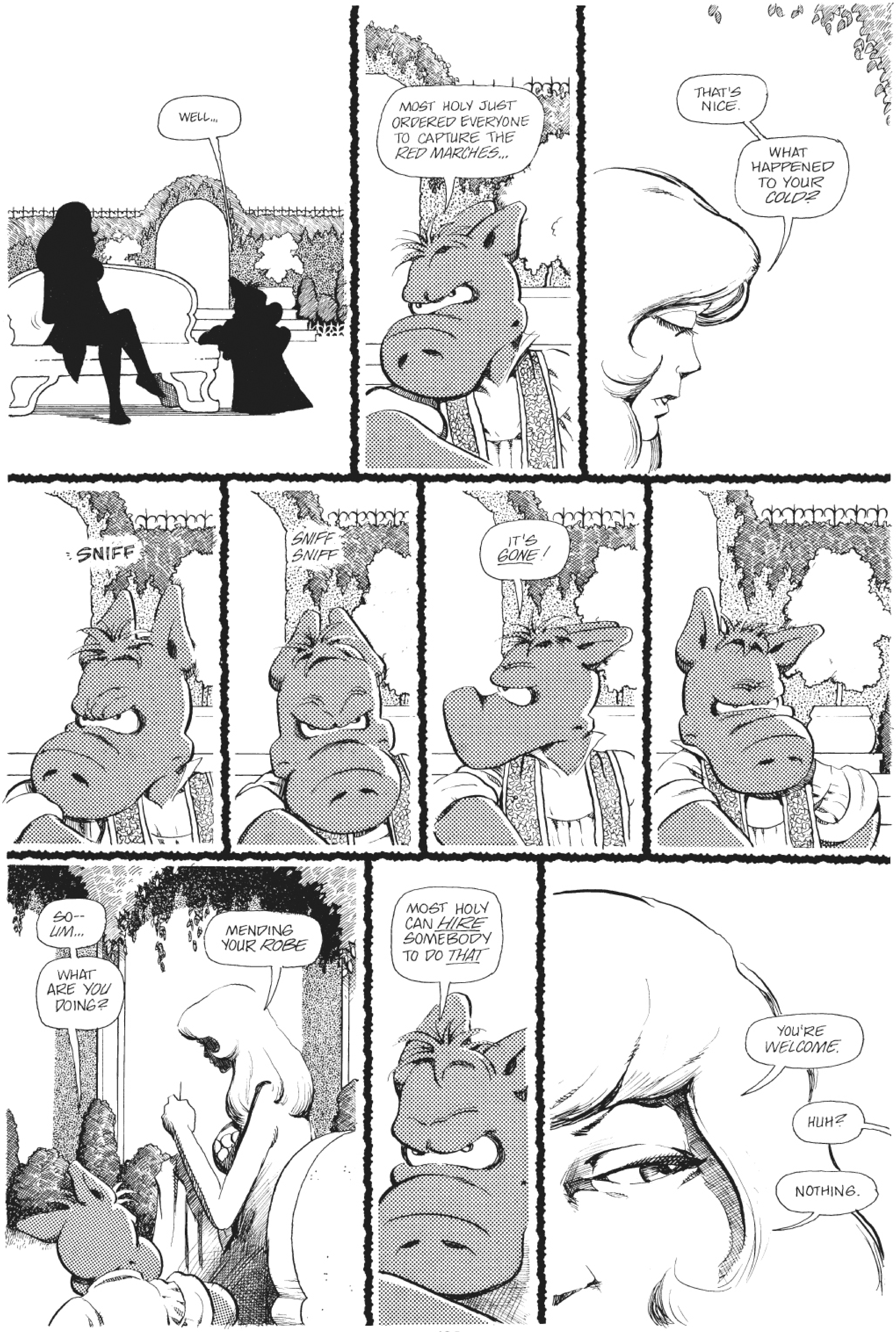

MOST HOLY JUST HAD HALF A BLACKBERRY PIE DROPPED ON HIS HEAD--
ALL OF MOST HOLY'S HAIR IS STUCK TOGETHER AND MOST HOLY CAN'T HEAR OUT OF HIS LEFT EAR!
WHY? BECAUSE HIS LEFT EAR IS FULL OF BLACKBERRIES AND PIE CRUST
IF MOST HOLY HAS TO SUFFER EVERYBODY HAS TO SUFFER...
The Great Cerebus has spoken. The Red Marches first. Bran
AND REMEMBER! TARIM WANTS ALL OF THE RED MARCHES!
ESPECIALLY THE QUICKSAND AND THE BLACK FLIES...

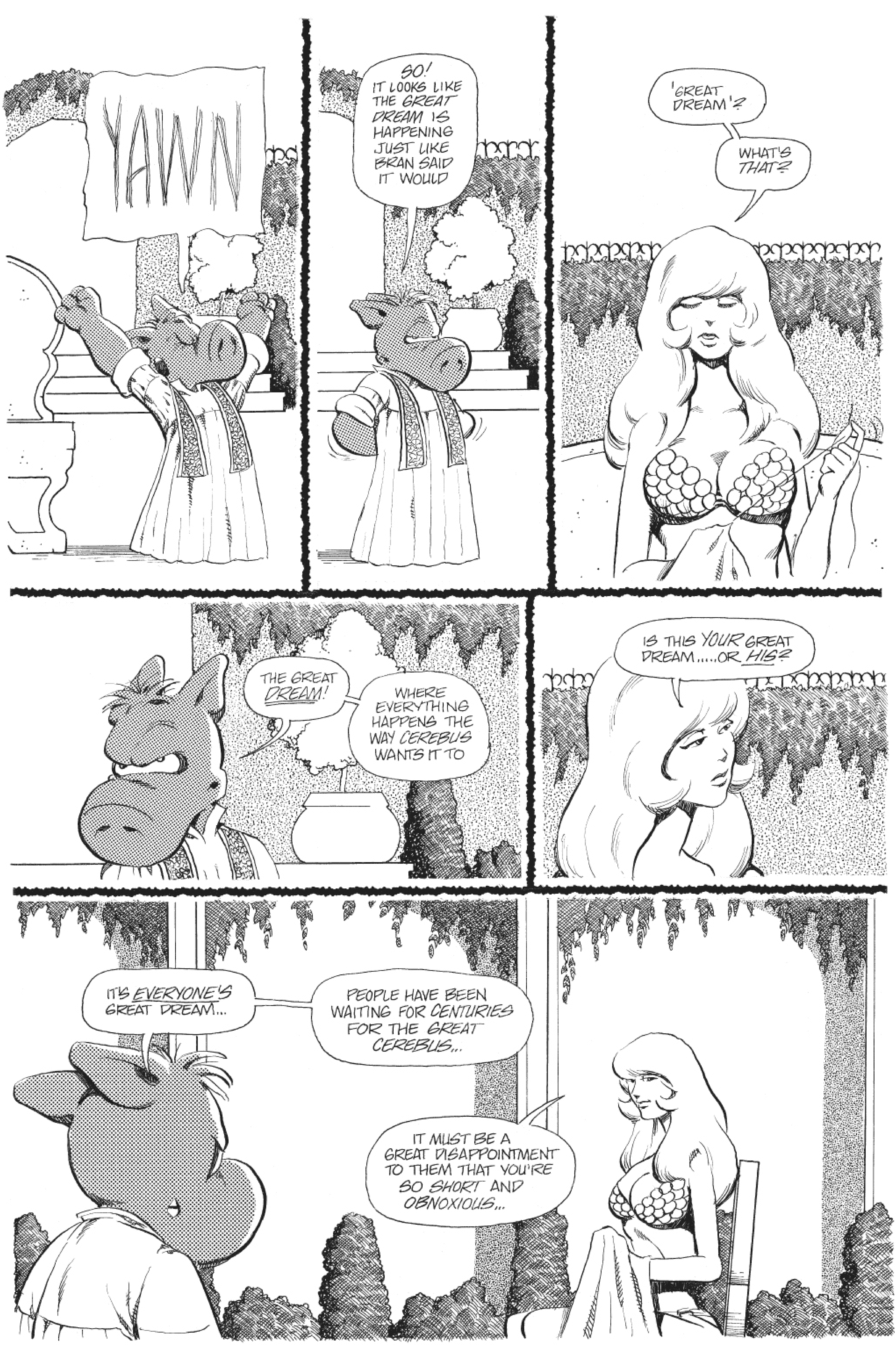

LET ME BACK IN!!
POUNDAPOUNDAPOUND
YOU CAN'T DO THIS TO ME!!
I HAVE TWO EX-WIVES AND FOURTEEN CHILDREN THAT I KNOW OF!!
I DON'T WANT TO BE PRESIDENT!
U F S
PUFF
PUFF
PUFF

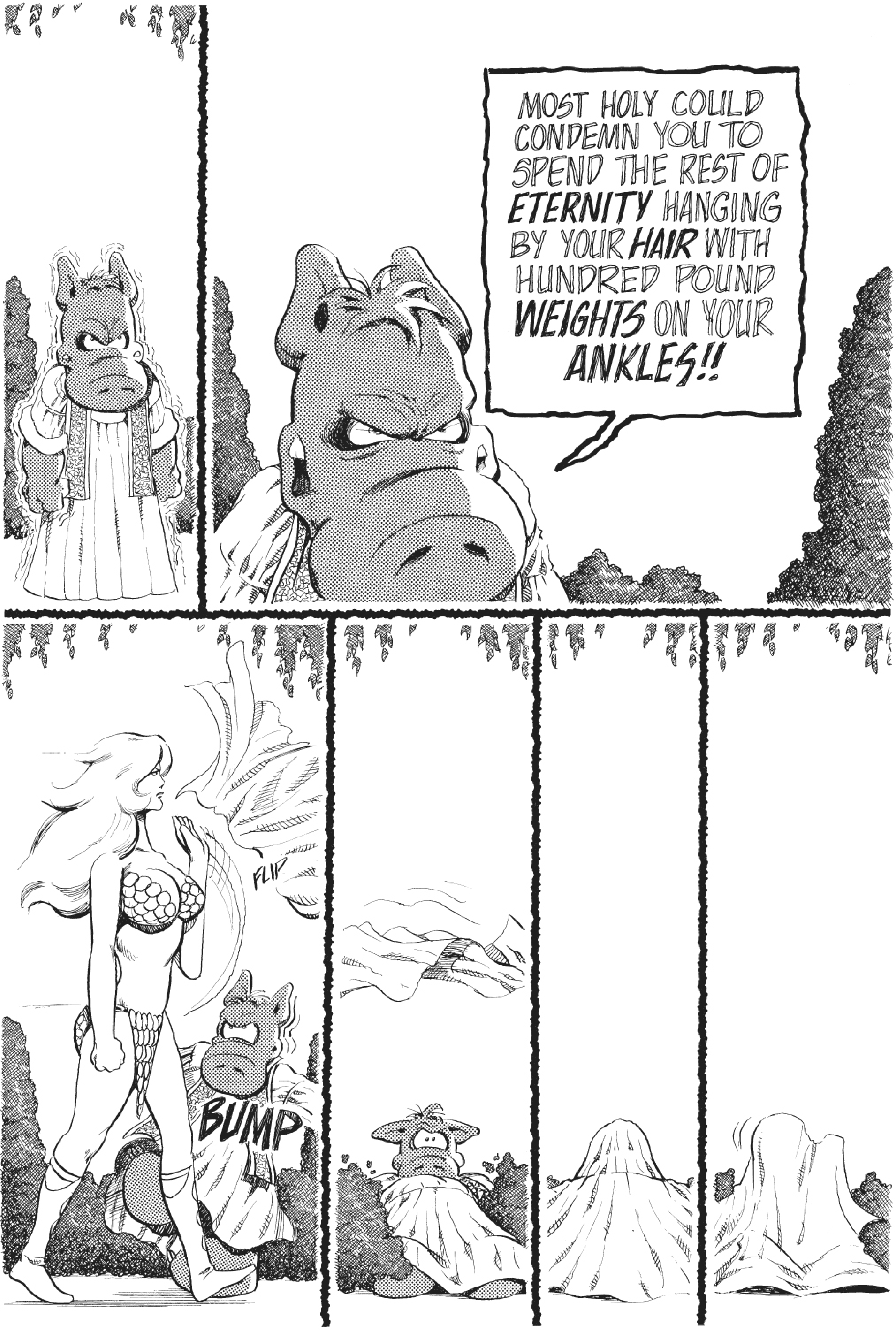

HE FELL FOR IT?
INAUGURATION'S THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW...
AMAZING
IT TOOK ALMOST AN HOUR, THOUGH
I MUST BE LOSING MY TOUCH...

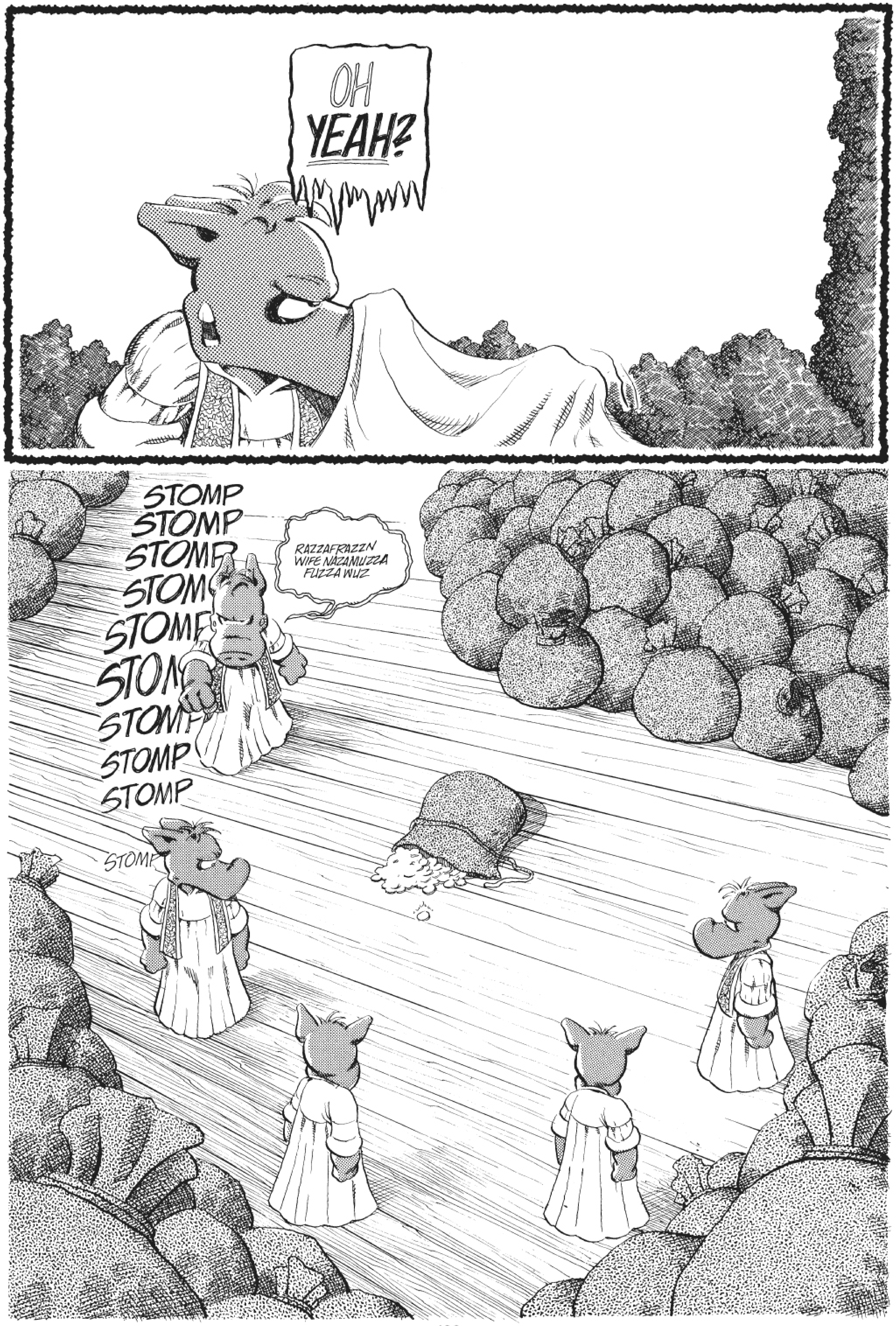

WHAT ARE WE GOING TO FIGHT WITH?
DON'T WORRY THE MARCH WILL PROBABLY KILL US...
BLACK FLIES YECH!
WHAT DO YOU SUPPOSE TARIM IS GOING TO DO WITH ALL THAT QUICKSAND?
PROBABLY MAKE US SPEND THE REST OF ETERNITY EATING IT...
TROMP TROMP TROMP TROMP TROMP TROMP TROMP TROMP TROMP TROMP

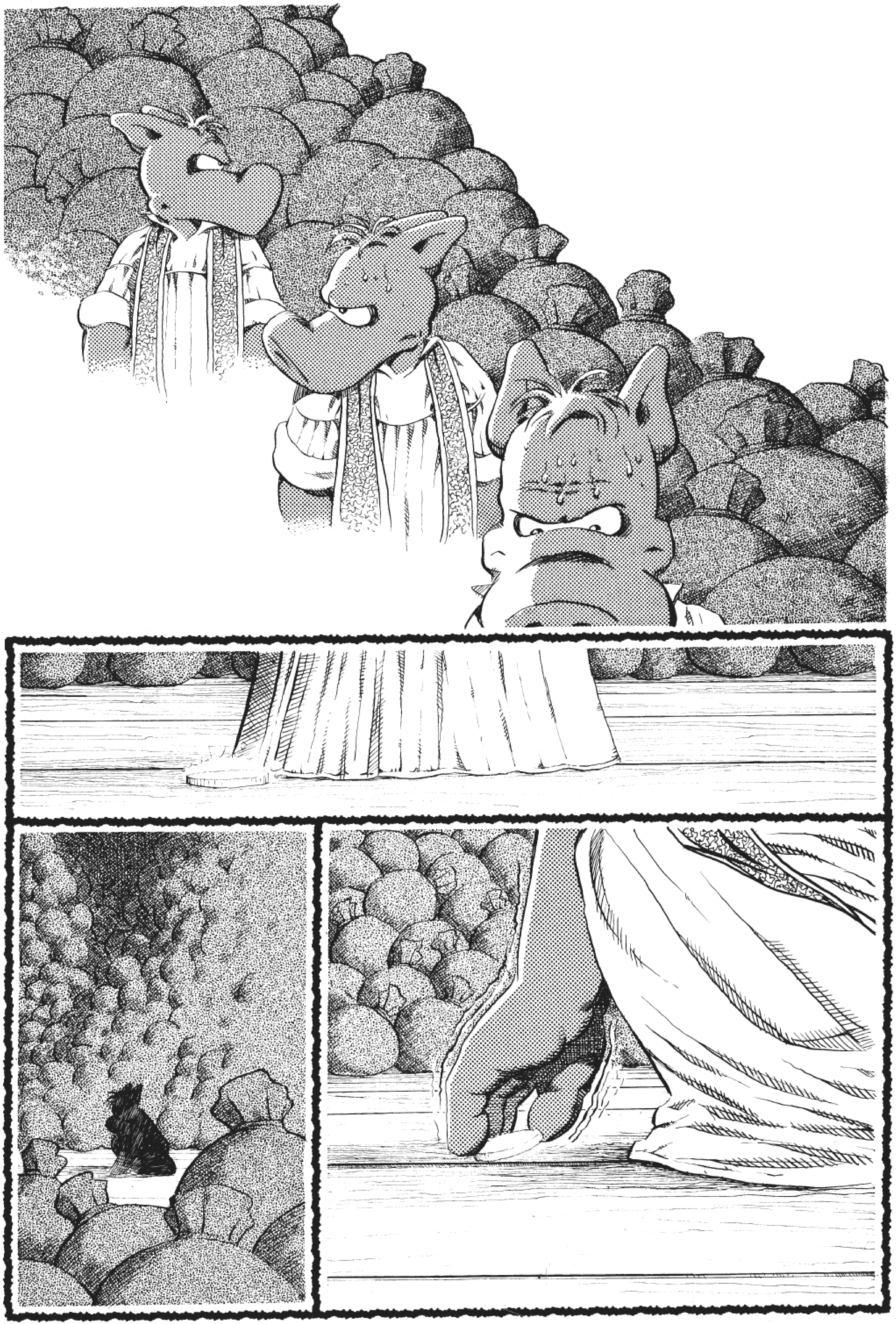


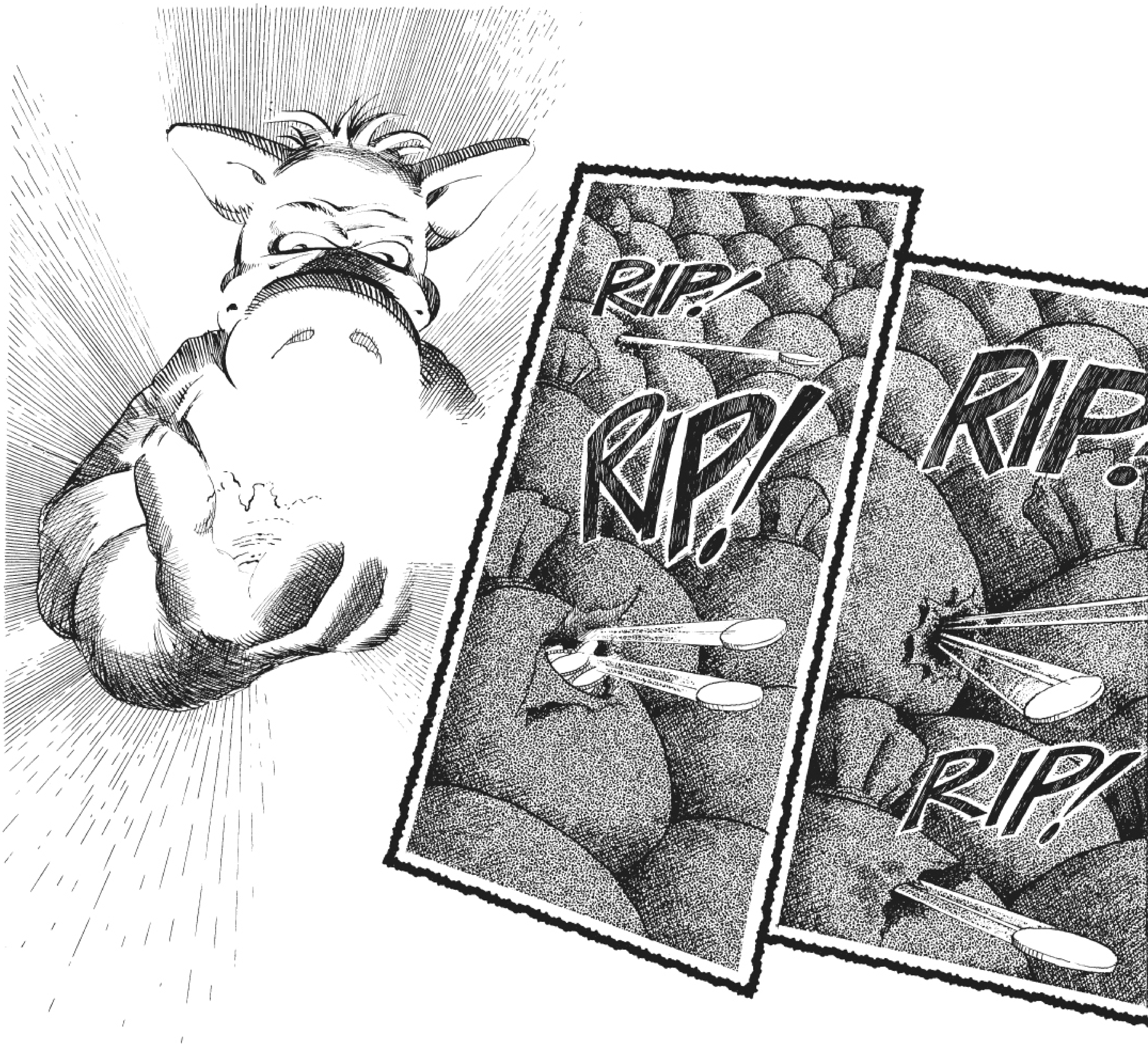

WELL...
MOST HOLY JUST ORDERED EVERYONE TO CAPTURE THE *RED MARCHES*...
THAT'S NICE.
WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR *COLD?*
SNIFF
SNIFF SNIFF
IT'S GONE!
SO-- UM...
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
MENDING YOUR *ROBE*
MOST HOLY CAN *HIRE* SOMEBODY TO DO THAT
YOU'RE *WELCOME.*
HUH?
NOTHING.

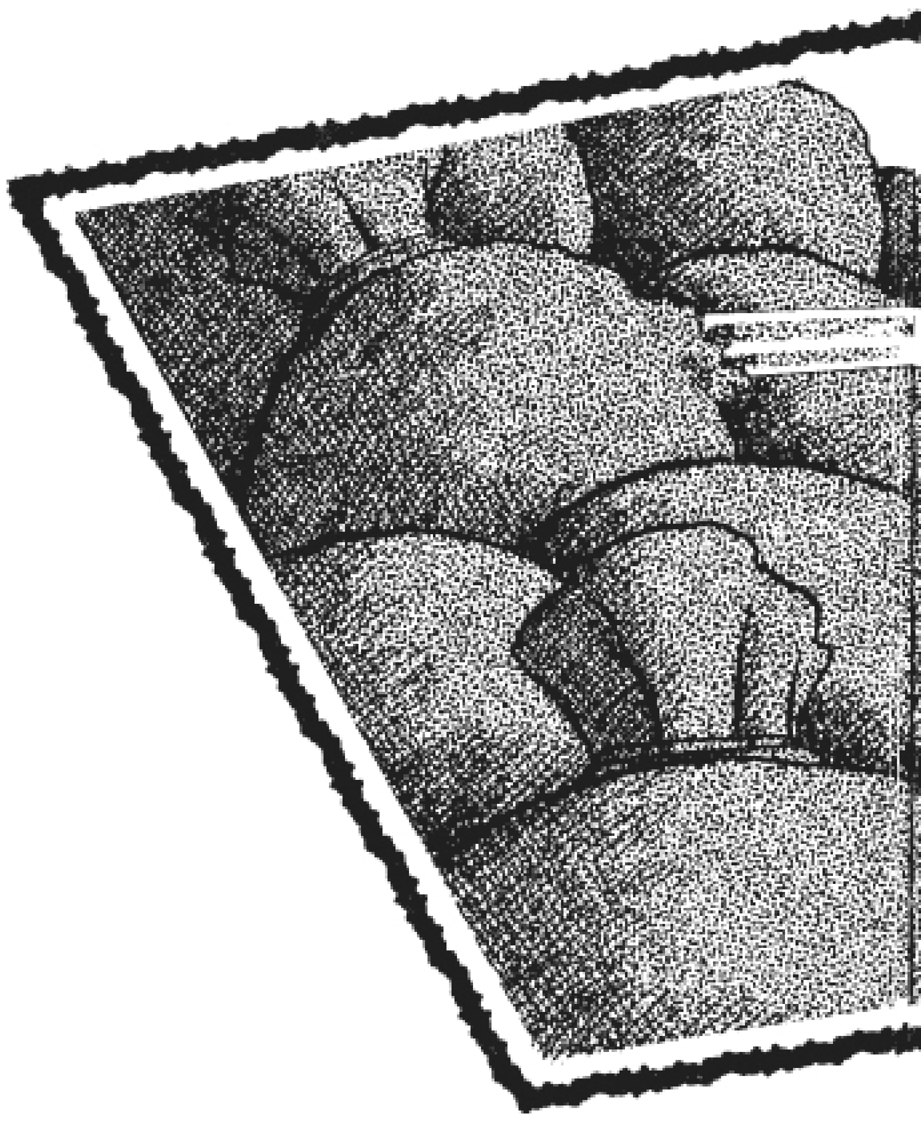

YAWN
SO! IT LOOKS LIKE THE GREAT DREAM IS HAPPENING JUST LIKE BRAN SAID IT WOULD
'GREAT DREAM'?
WHAT'S THAT?
THE GREAT DREAM!
WHERE EVERYTHING HAPPENS THE WAY CEREBUS WANTS IT TO
IS THIS YOUR GREAT DREAM.....OR HIS?
IT'S EVERYONE'S GREAT DREAM...
PEOPLE HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR CENTURIES FOR THE GREAT CEREBUS...
IT MUST BE A GREAT DISAPPOINTMENT TO THEM THAT YOU'RE SO SHORT AND OBNOXIOUS...

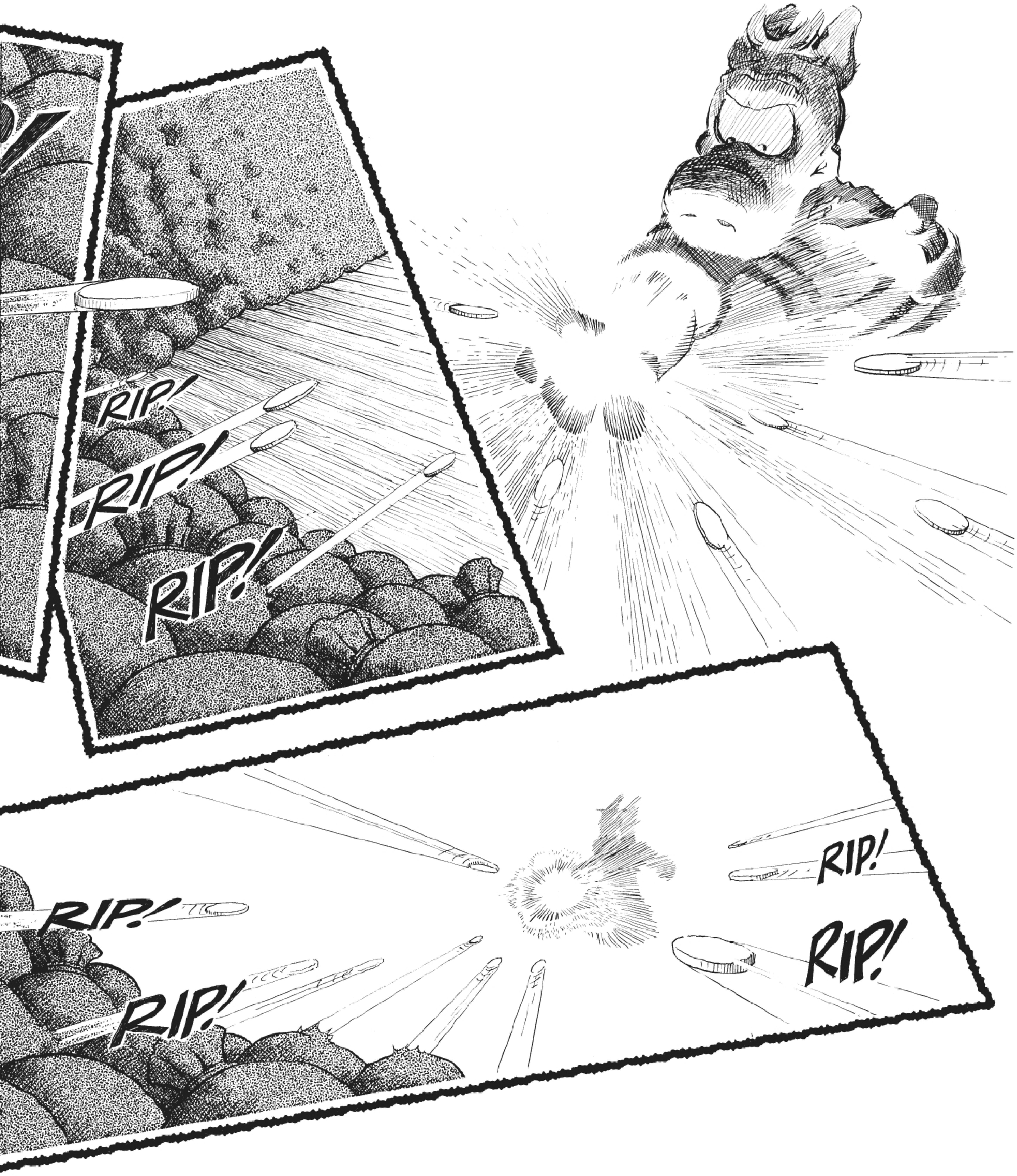

MOST HOLY COULD CONDEMN YOU TO SPEND THE REST OF **ETERNITY** HANGING BY YOUR **HAIR** WITH HUNDRED POUND **WEIGHTS** ON YOUR **ANKLES!!**
FLIP
BUMP


OH YEAH?
STOMP
STOMP
STOMP
STOM
STOMP
STOM
STOMP
STOMP
STOMP
RAZZAFRAZZN WIFE NAZAMUZZA FUZZA WUZ
STOMP




RIP!
RIP!
RIP!
RIP!




RIP!
RIP!
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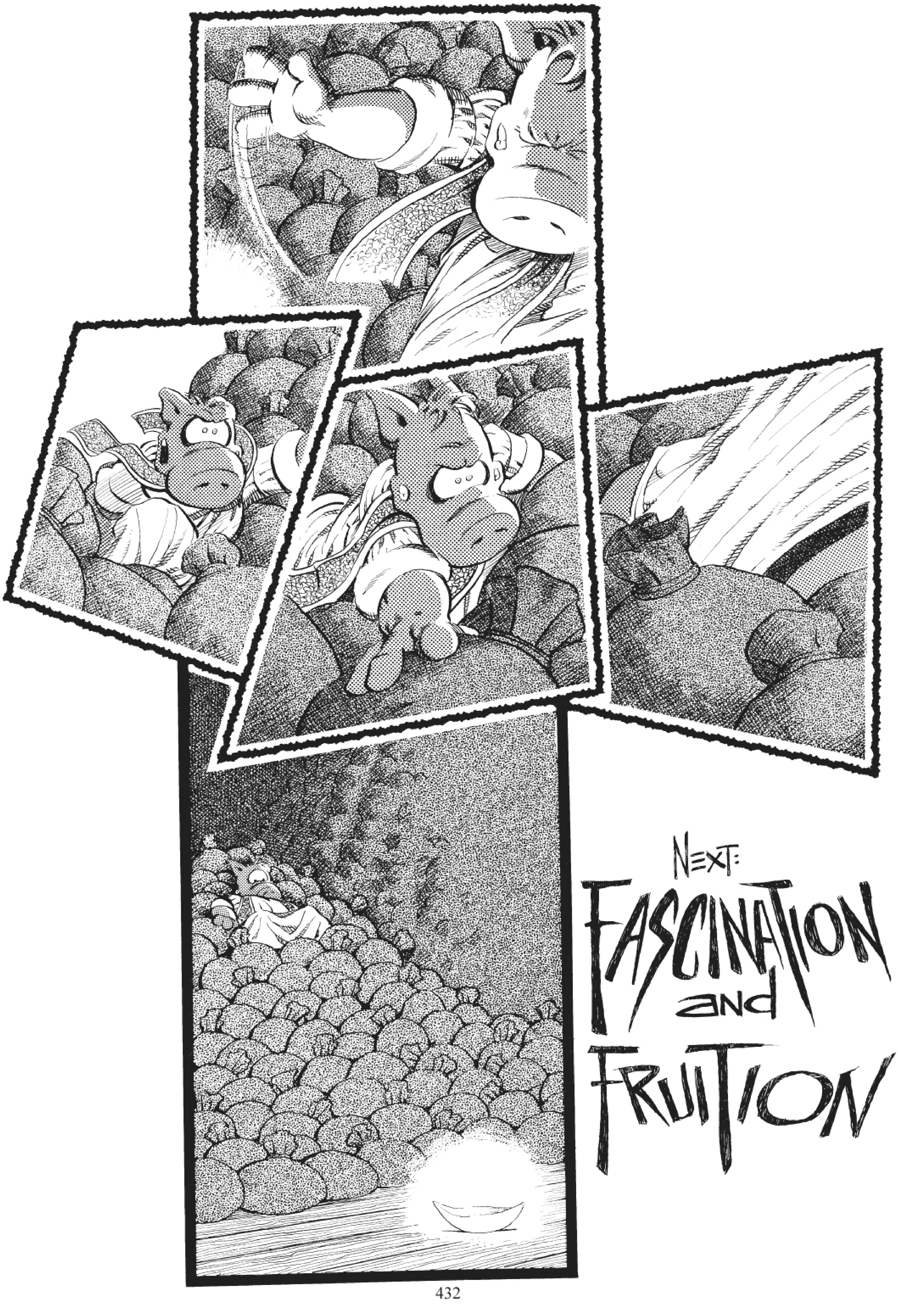
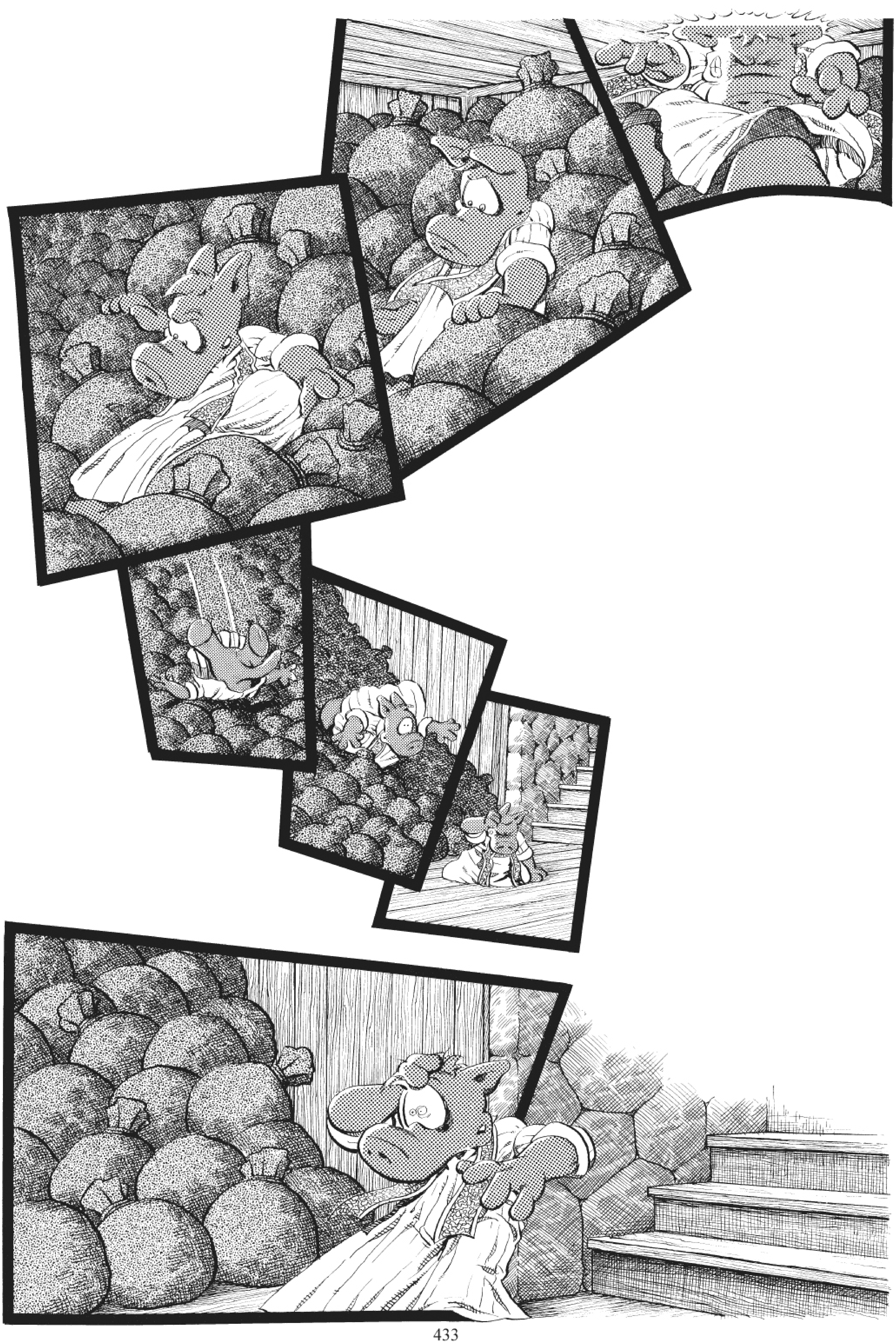
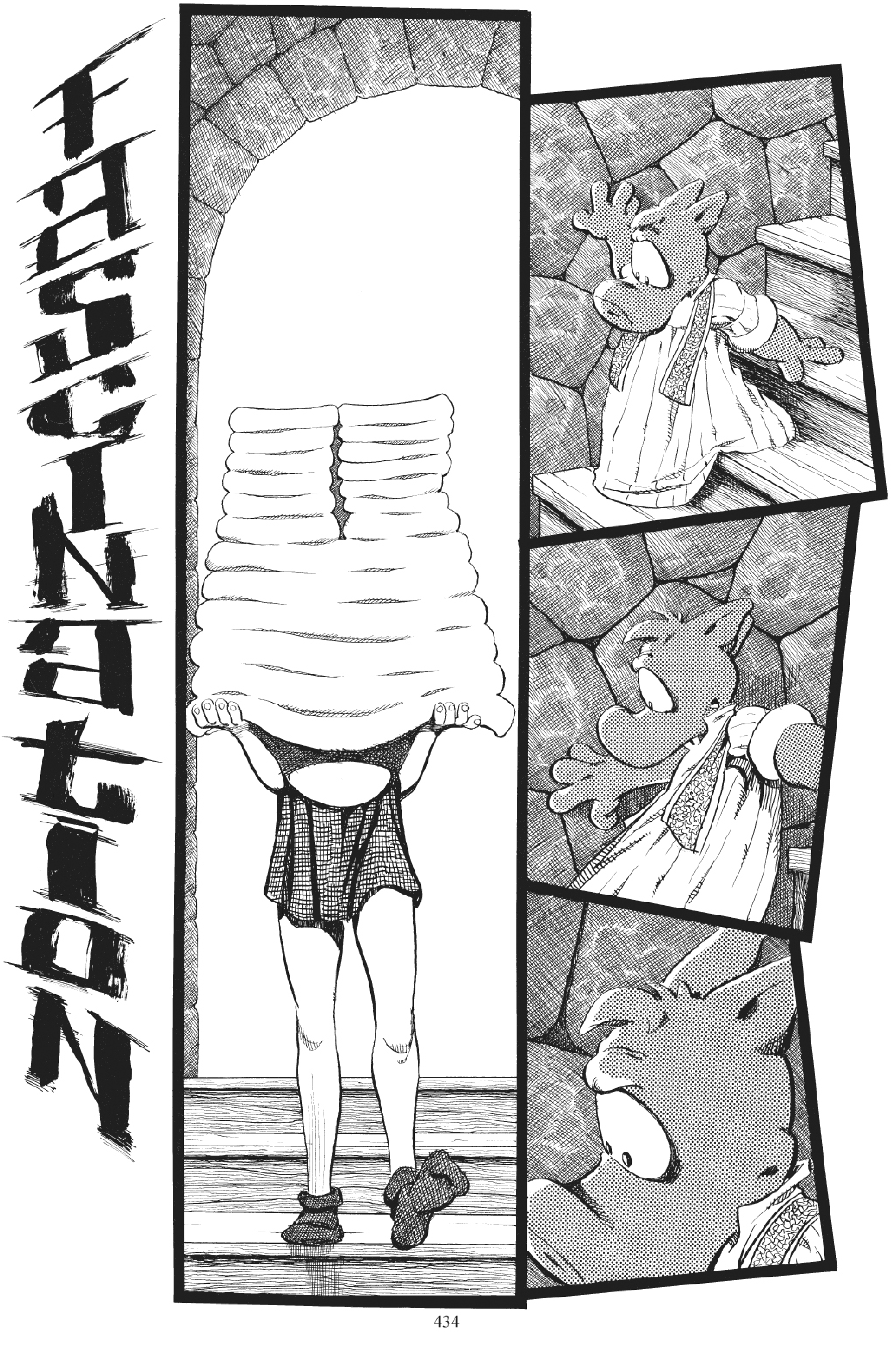
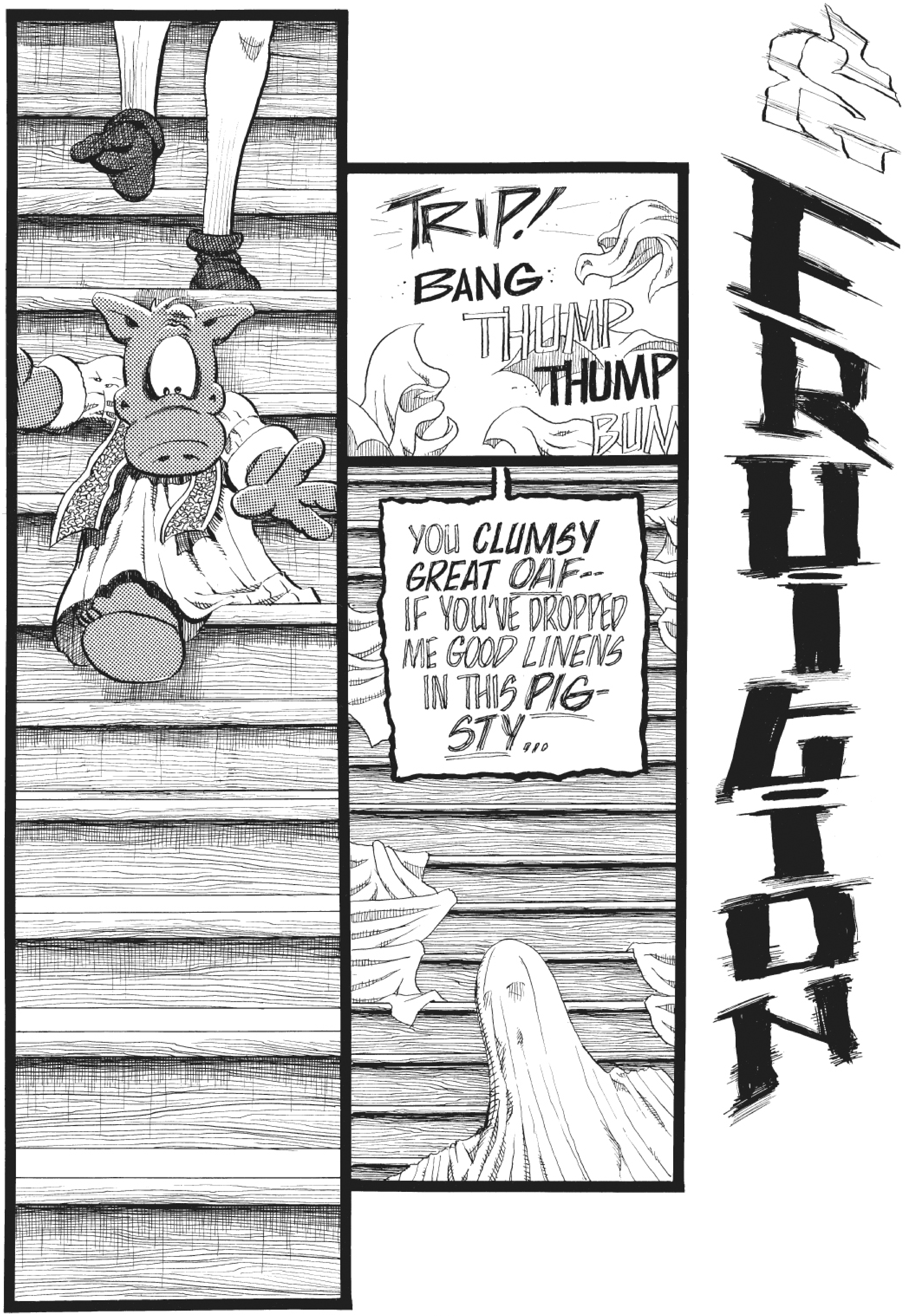
RIP!
RIP!

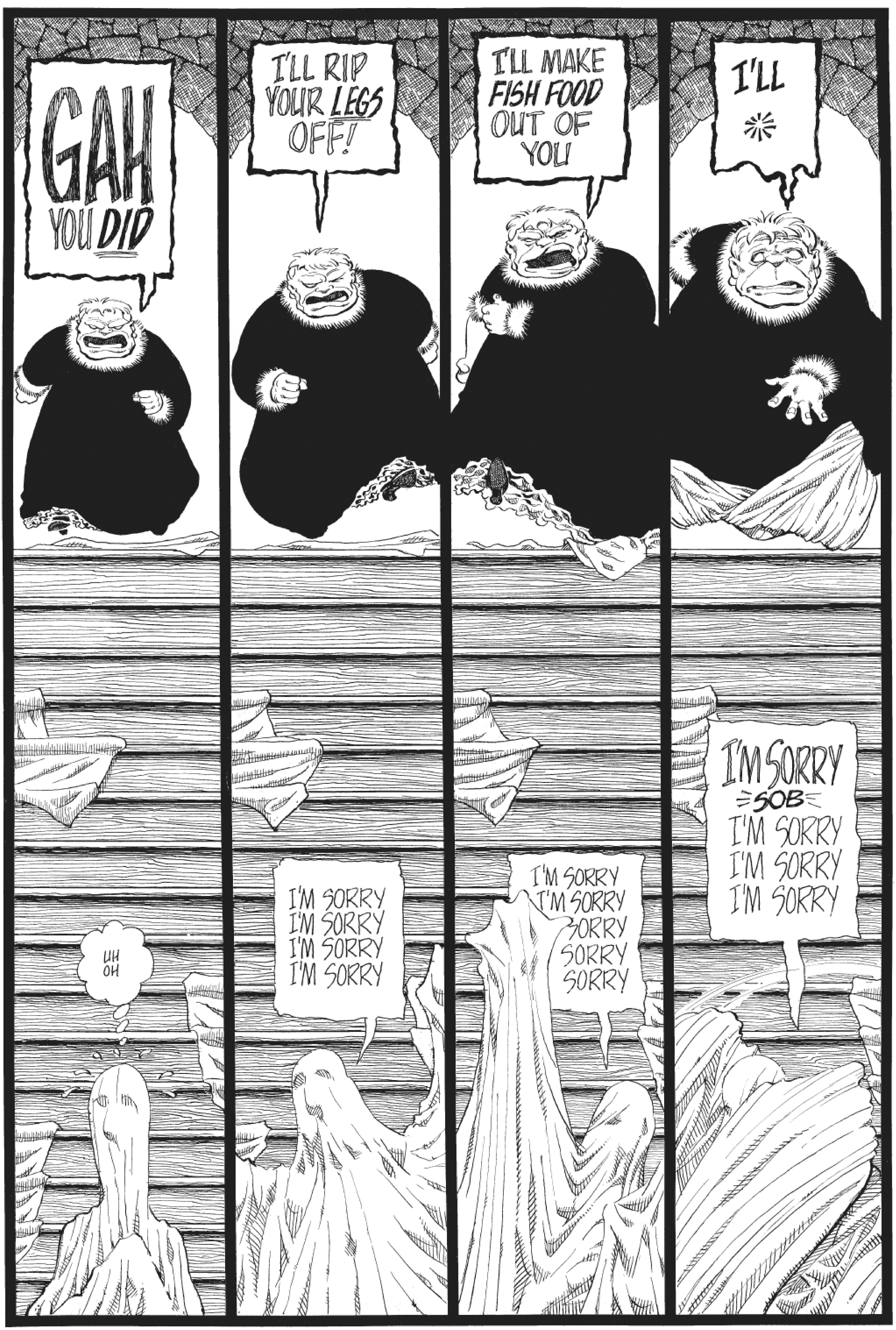


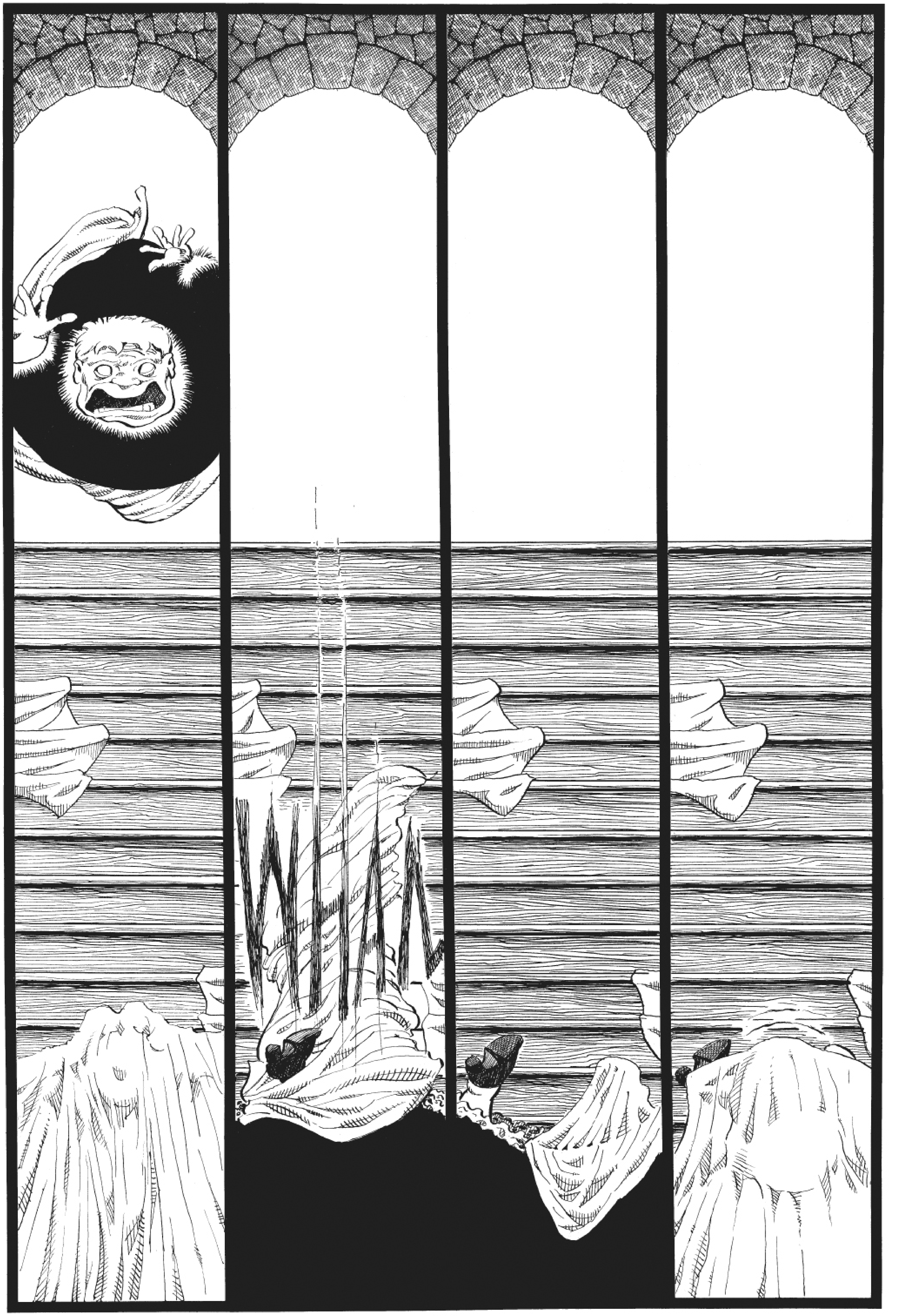
NEXT:
FASCINATION
and
FRUITION

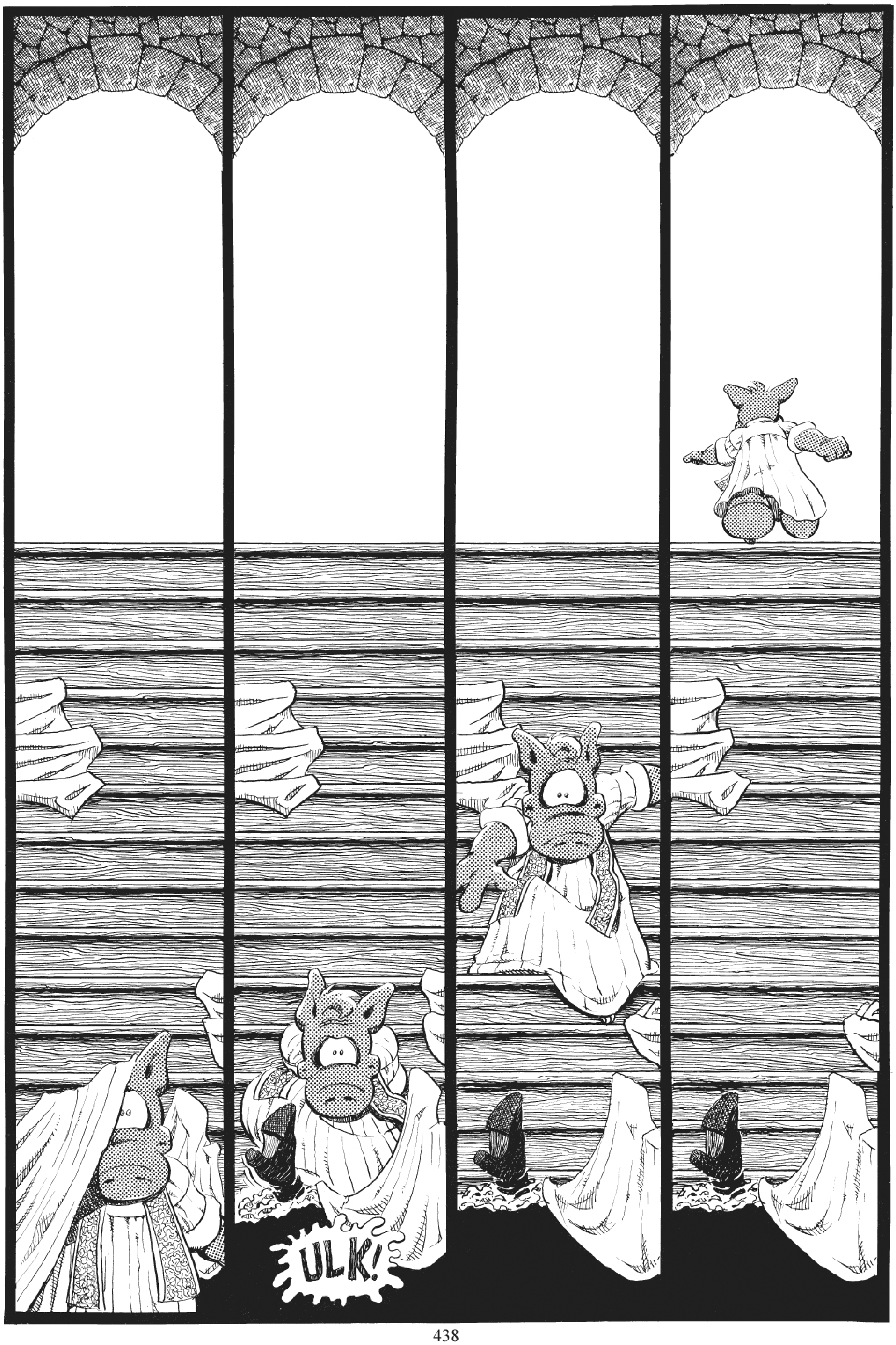


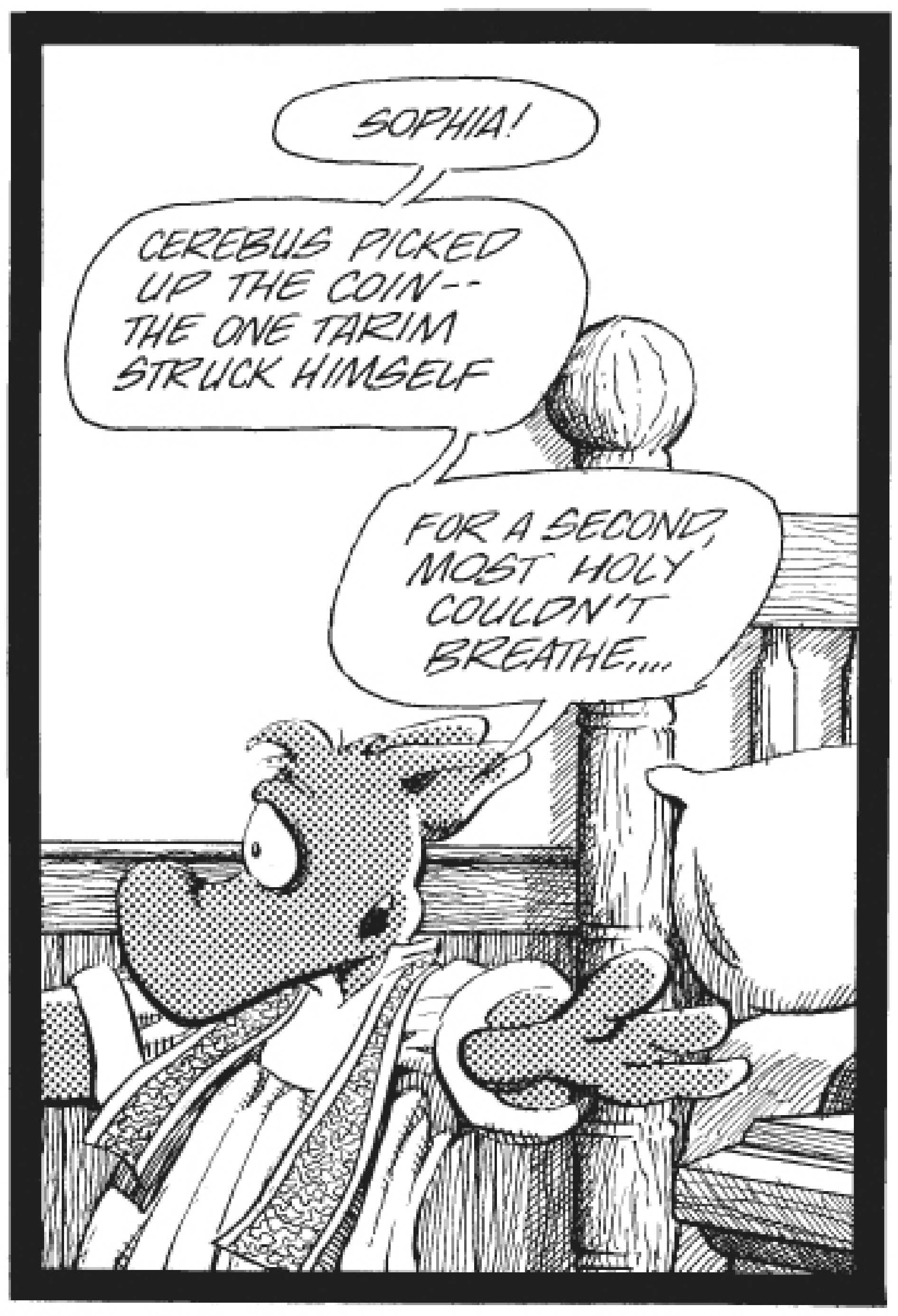

FASCINATION

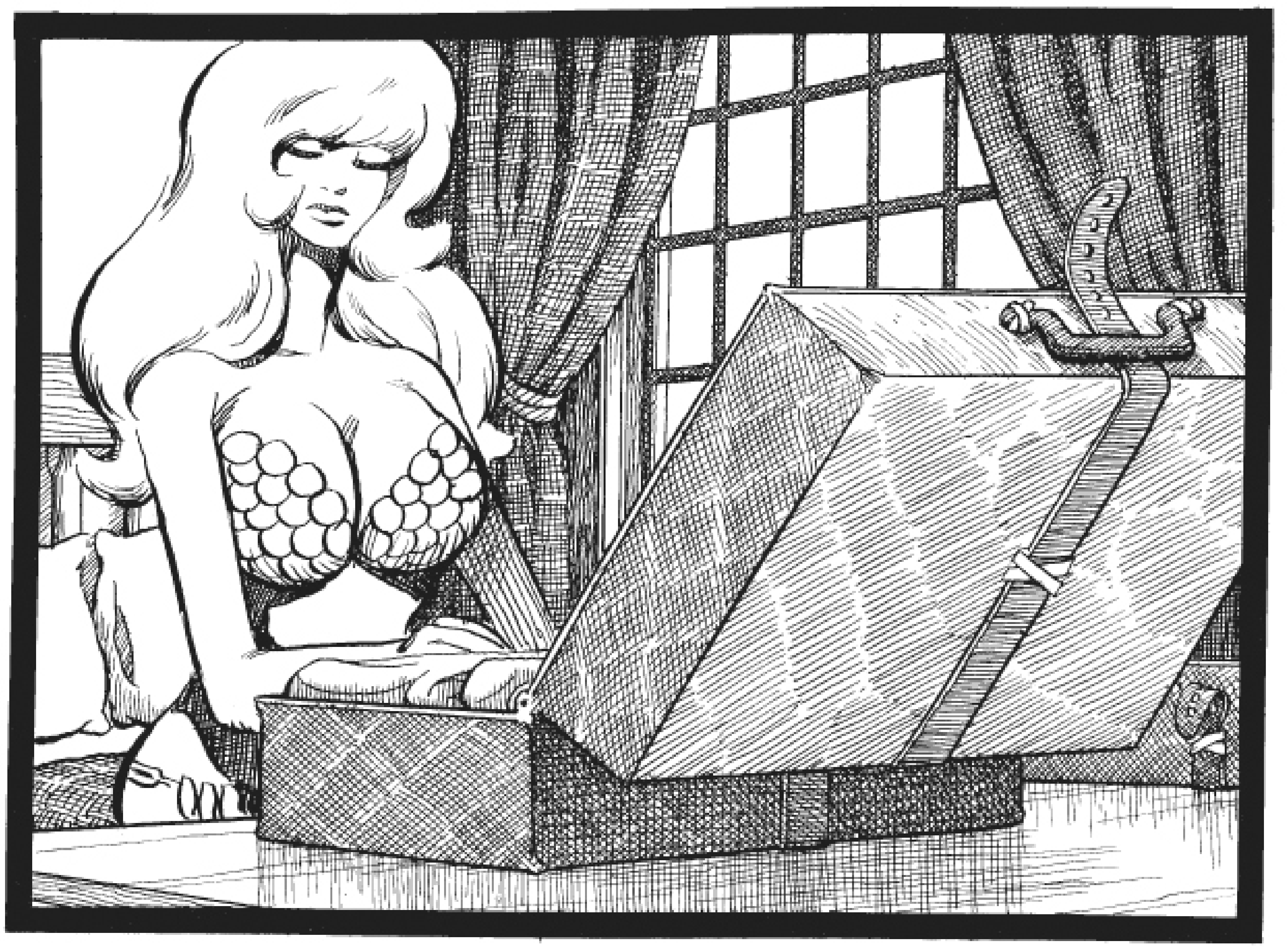

TRIP!
BANG
THUMP
THUMP
BUM
YOU CLUMSY GREAT OAF-- IF YOU'VE DROPPED ME GOOD LINENS IN THIS PIG-STY...

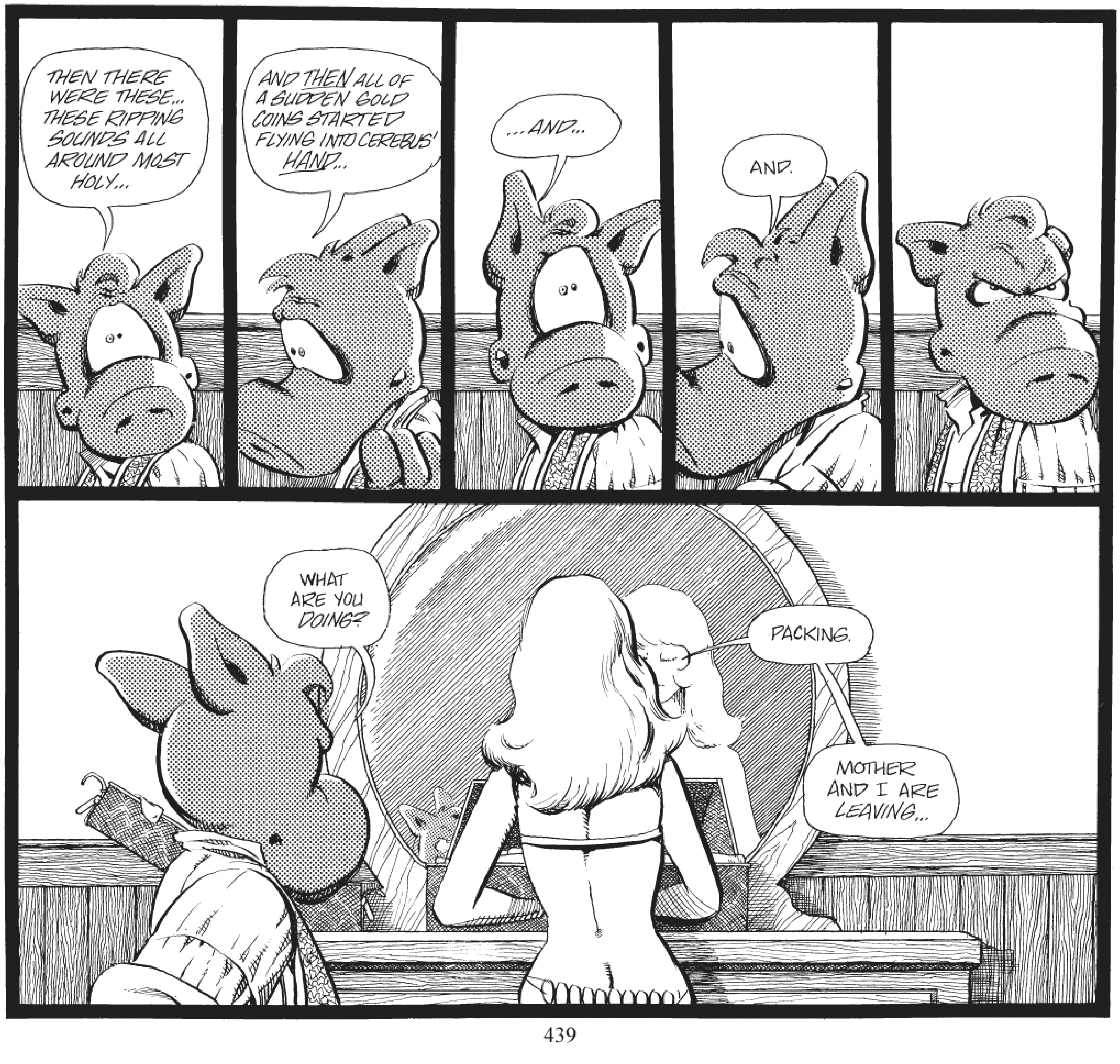

GAH YOU DID
UH OH
I'LL RIP YOUR LEGS OFF!
I'M SORRY I'M SORRY I'M SORRY I'M SORRY
I'LL MAKE FISH FOOD OUT OF YOU
I'M SORRY I'M SORRY SORRY SORRY SORRY
I'LL *
I'M SORRY SOB I'M SORRY I'M SORRY I'M SORRY

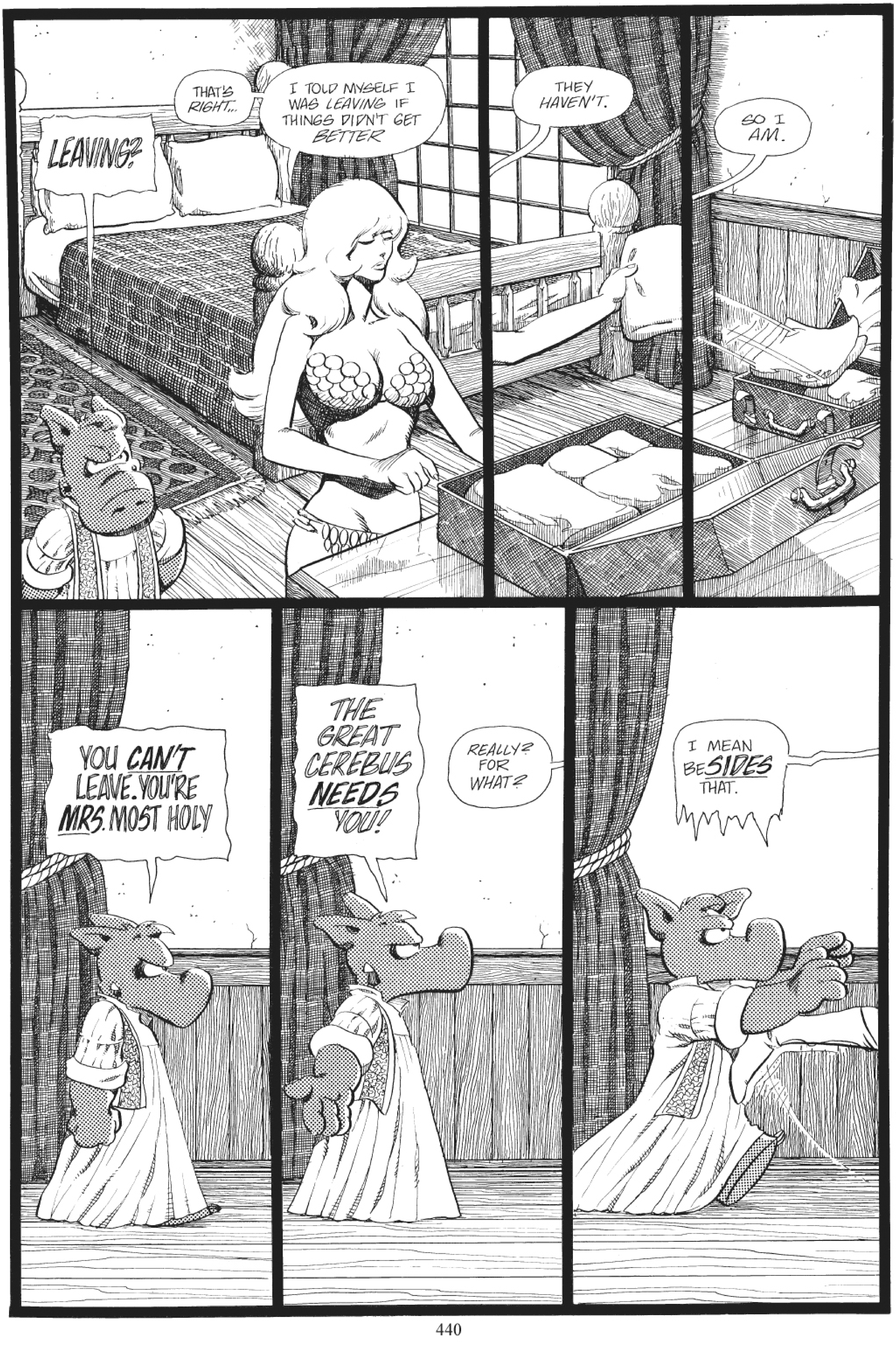

WHAM

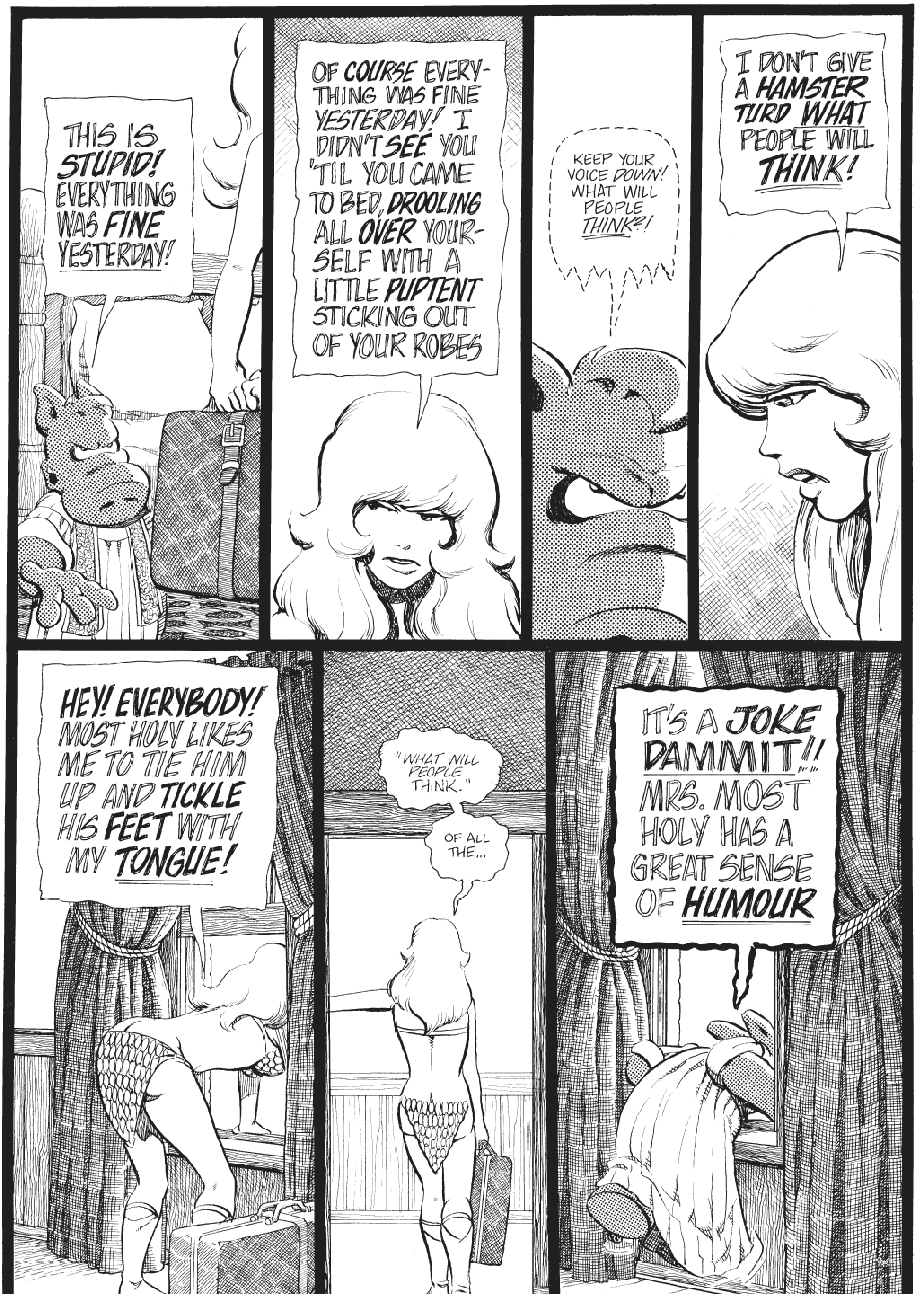

ULK!

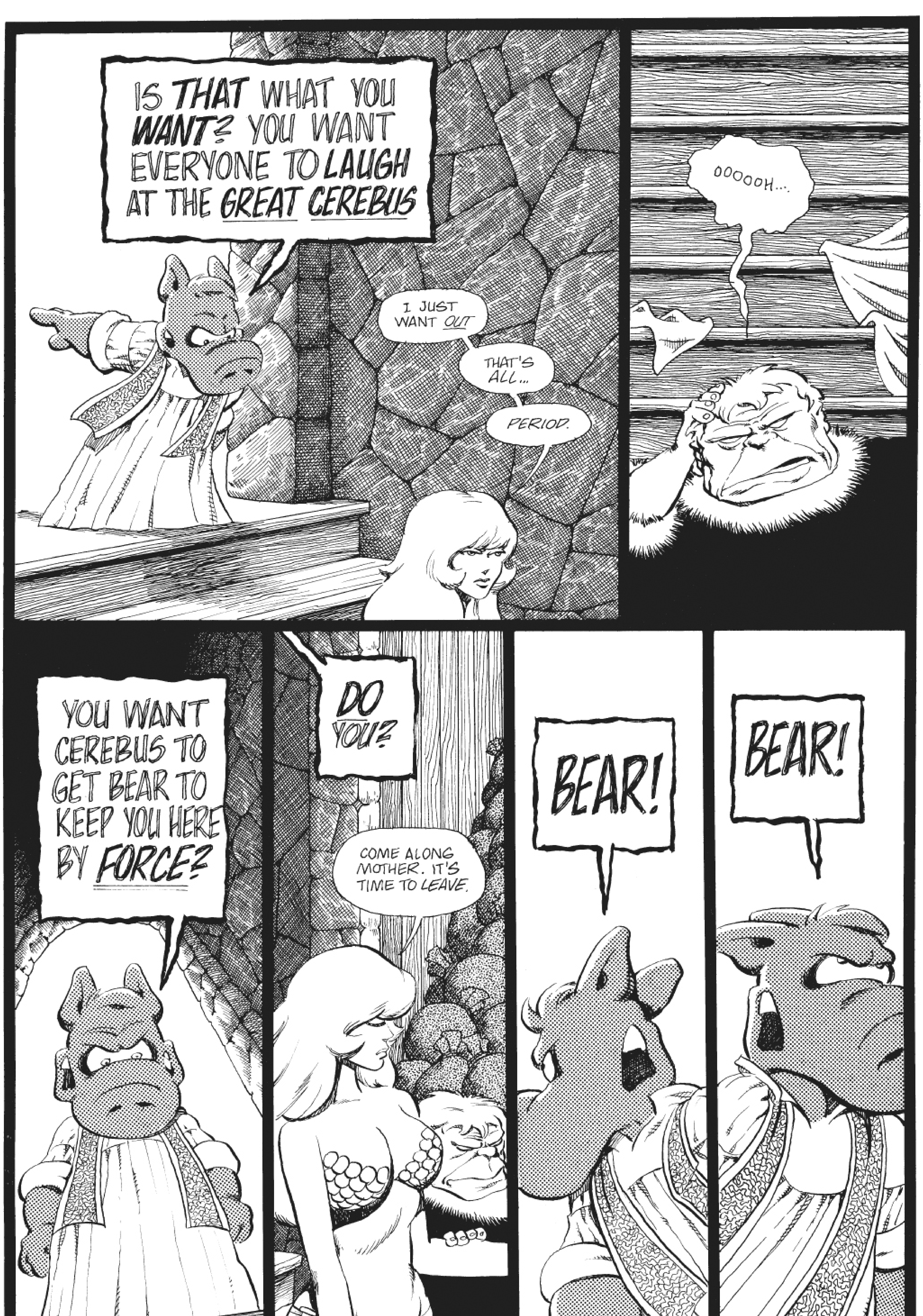

SOPHIA!
CEREBUS PICKED UP THE COIN-- THE ONE TARIM STRUCK HIMSELF
FOR A SECOND, MOST HOLY COULDN'T BREATHE....

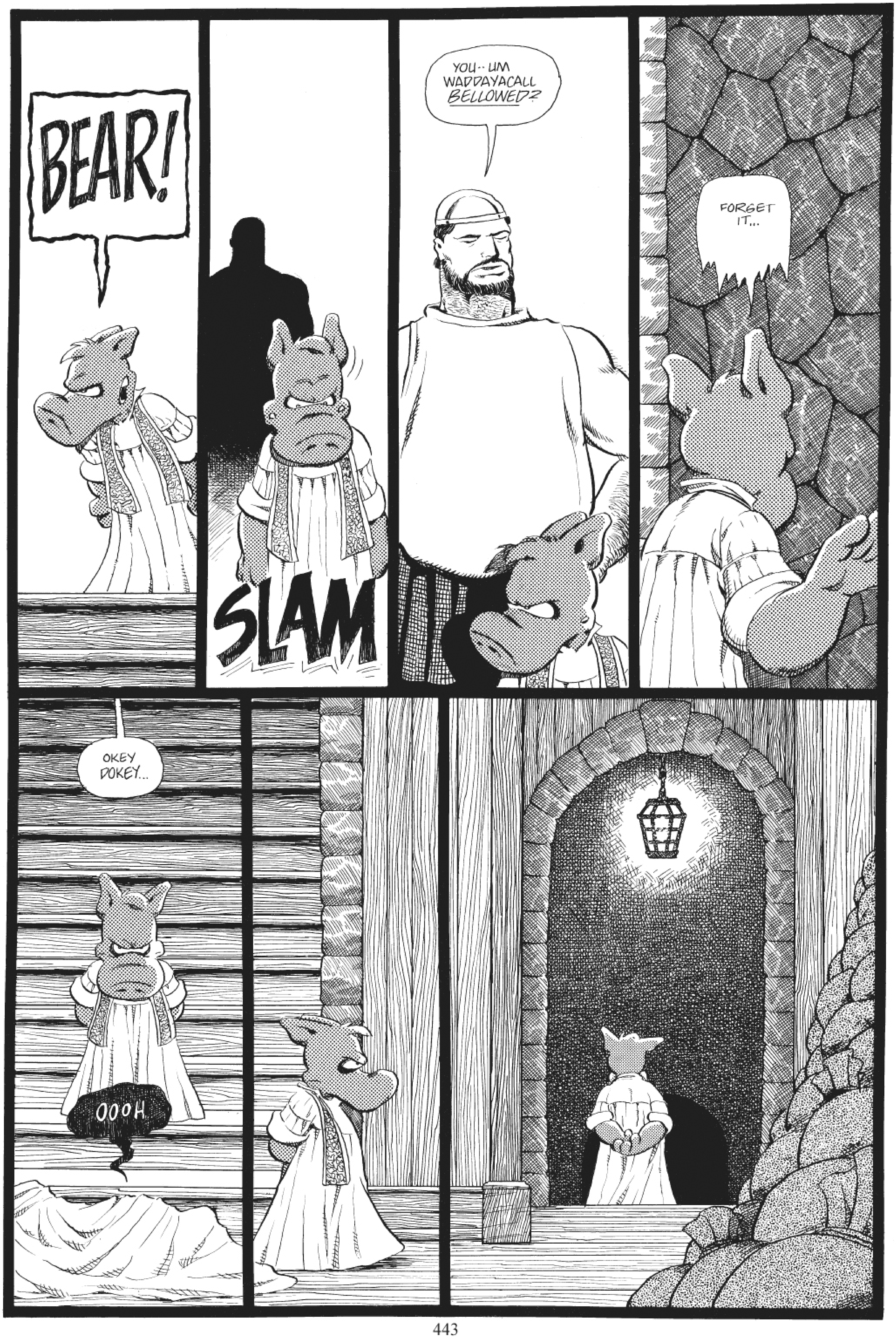


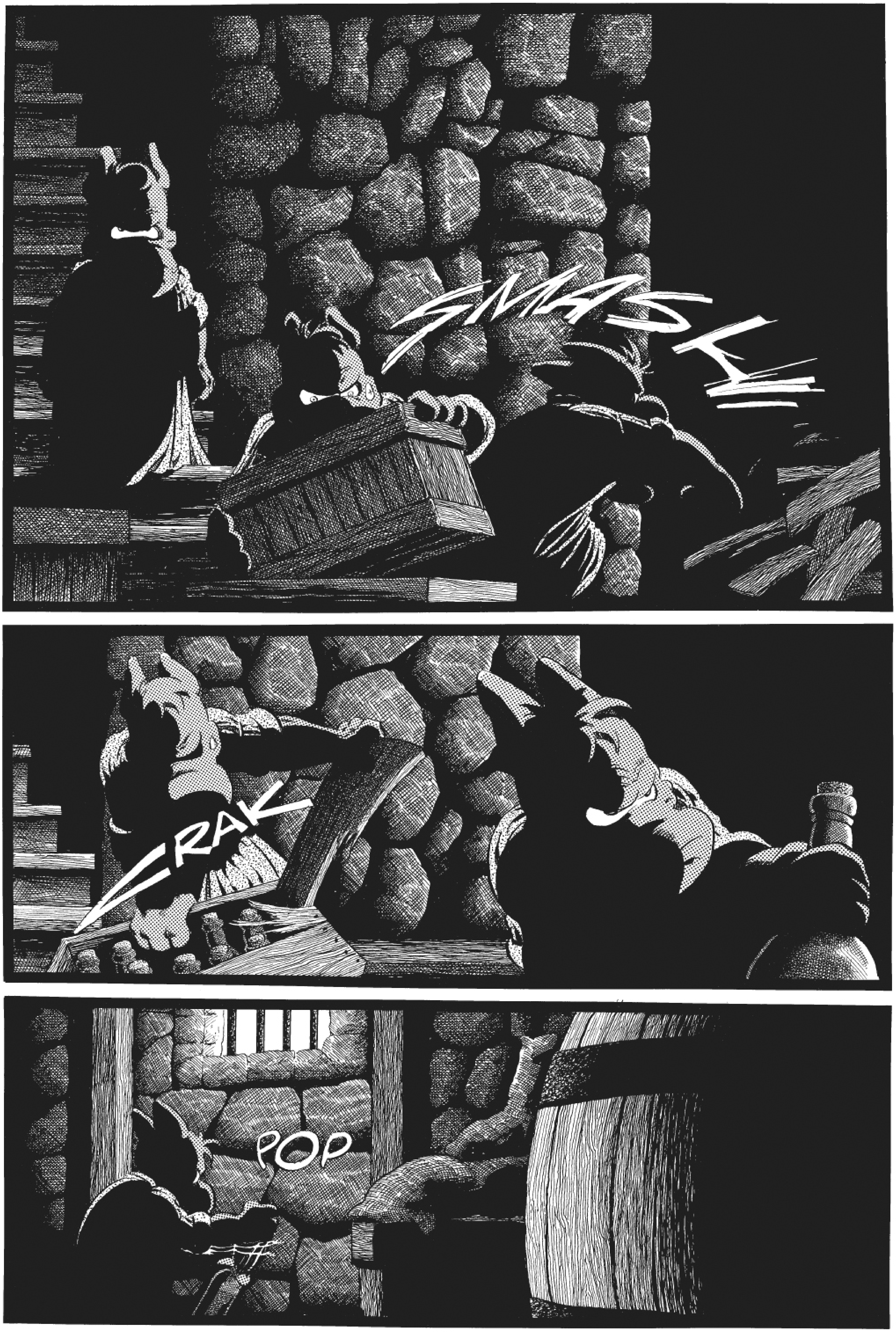

THEN THERE WERE THESE... THESE RIPPING SOUNDS ALL AROUND MOST HOLY...
AND THEN ALL OF A SUDDEN GOLD COINS STARTED FLYING INTO CEREBUS' HAND...
...AND...
AND.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
PACKING.
MOTHER AND I ARE LEAVING...

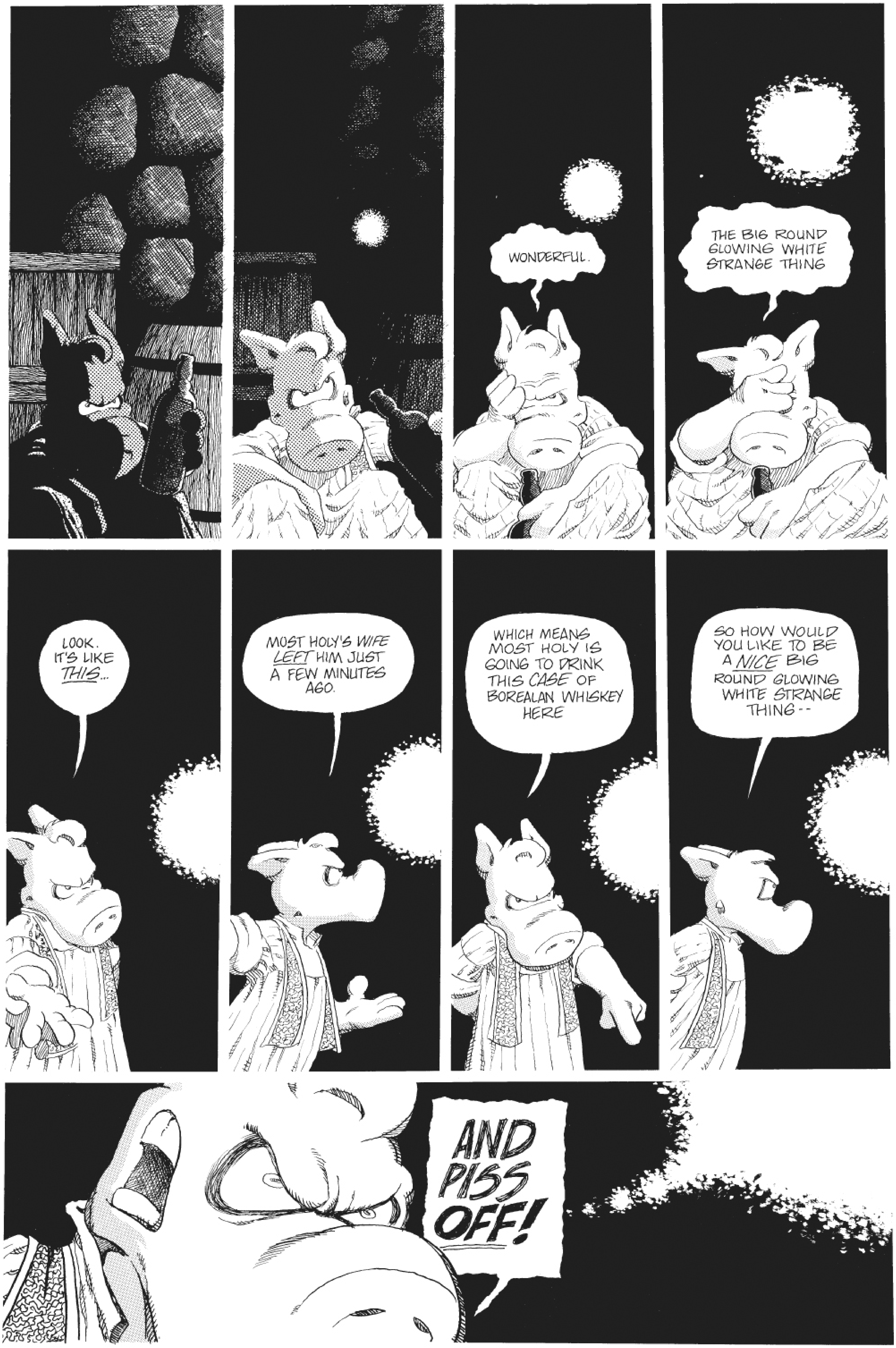

LEAVING?
THAT'S RIGHT...
I TOLD MYSELF I WAS LEAVING IF THINGS DIDN'T GET BETTER
THEY HAVEN'T.
SO I AM.
YOU CAN'T LEAVE. YOU'RE MRS. MOST HOLY
THE GREAT CEREBUS NEEDS YOU!
REALLY? FOR WHAT?
I MEAN BESIDES THAT.

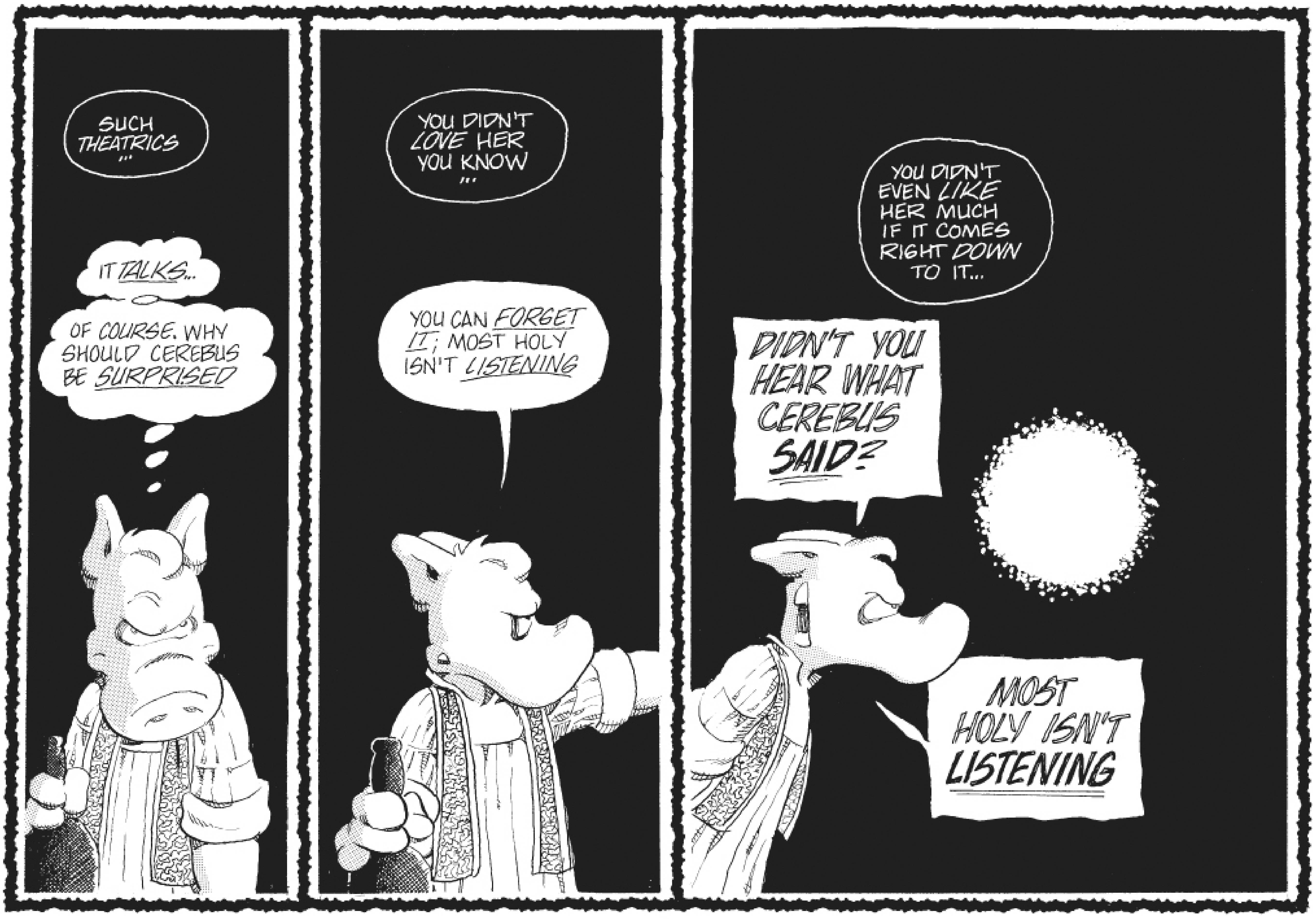

THIS IS STUPID! EVERYTHING WAS FINE YESTERDAY!
OF COURSE EVERYTHING WAS FINE YESTERDAY! I DIDN'T SEE YOU 'TIL YOU CAME TO BED, DROOLING ALL OVER YOURSELF WITH A LITTLE PUPTENT STICKING OUT OF YOUR ROBES
KEEP YOUR VOICE DOWN! WHAT WILL PEOPLE THINK?!
I DON'T GIVE A HAMSTER TURD WHAT PEOPLE WILL THINK!
HEY! EVERYBODY! MOST HOLY LIKES ME TO TIE HIM UP AND TICKLE HIS FEET WITH MY TONGUE!
"WHAT WILL PEOPLE THINK."
OF ALL THE...
IT'S A JOKE DAMMIT!! MRS. MOST HOLY HAS A GREAT SENSE OF HUMOUR

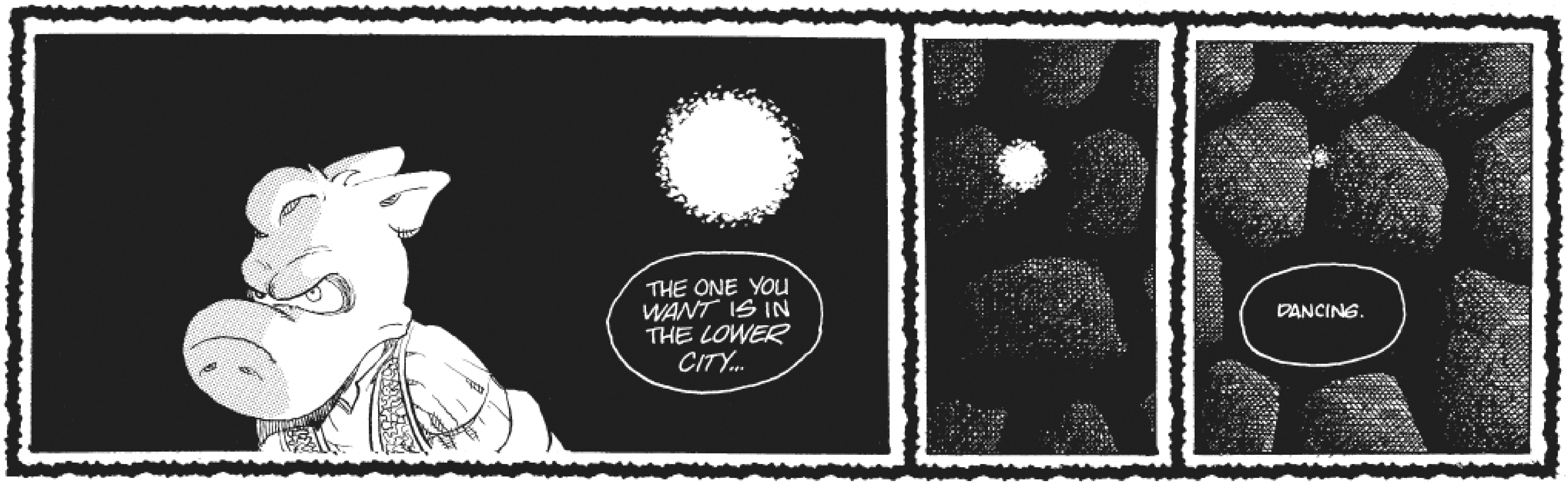

IS THAT WHAT YOU WANT? YOU WANT EVERYONE TO LAUGH AT THE GREAT CEREBUS
I JUST WANT OUT
THAT'S ALL...
PERIOD.
OOOOOH...
YOU WANT CEREBUS TO GET BEAR TO KEEP YOU HERE BY FORCE?
DO YOU?
COME ALONG MOTHER. IT'S TIME TO LEAVE.
BEAR!
BEAR!

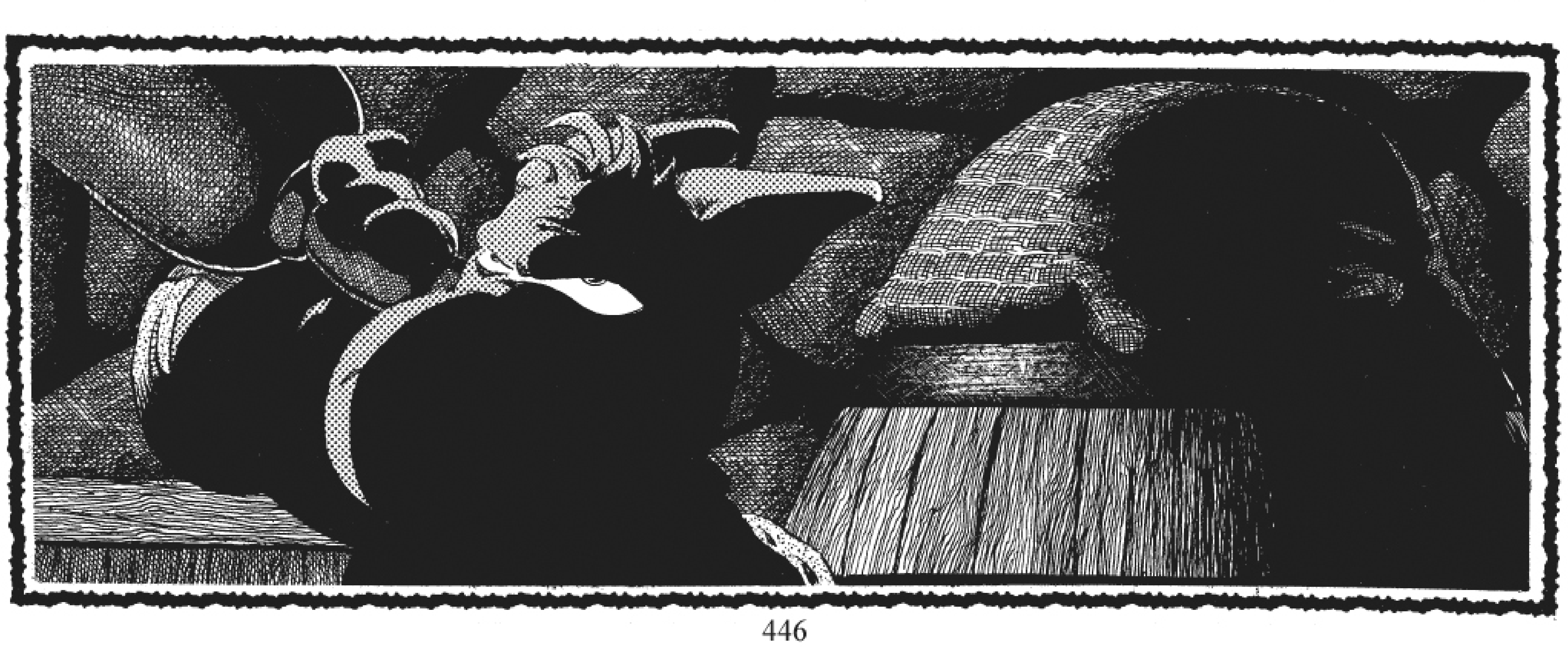

BEAR!
SLAM
YOU-- UM WADDAYACALL BELLOWED?
FORGET IT...
OKEY DOKEY...
OOOH

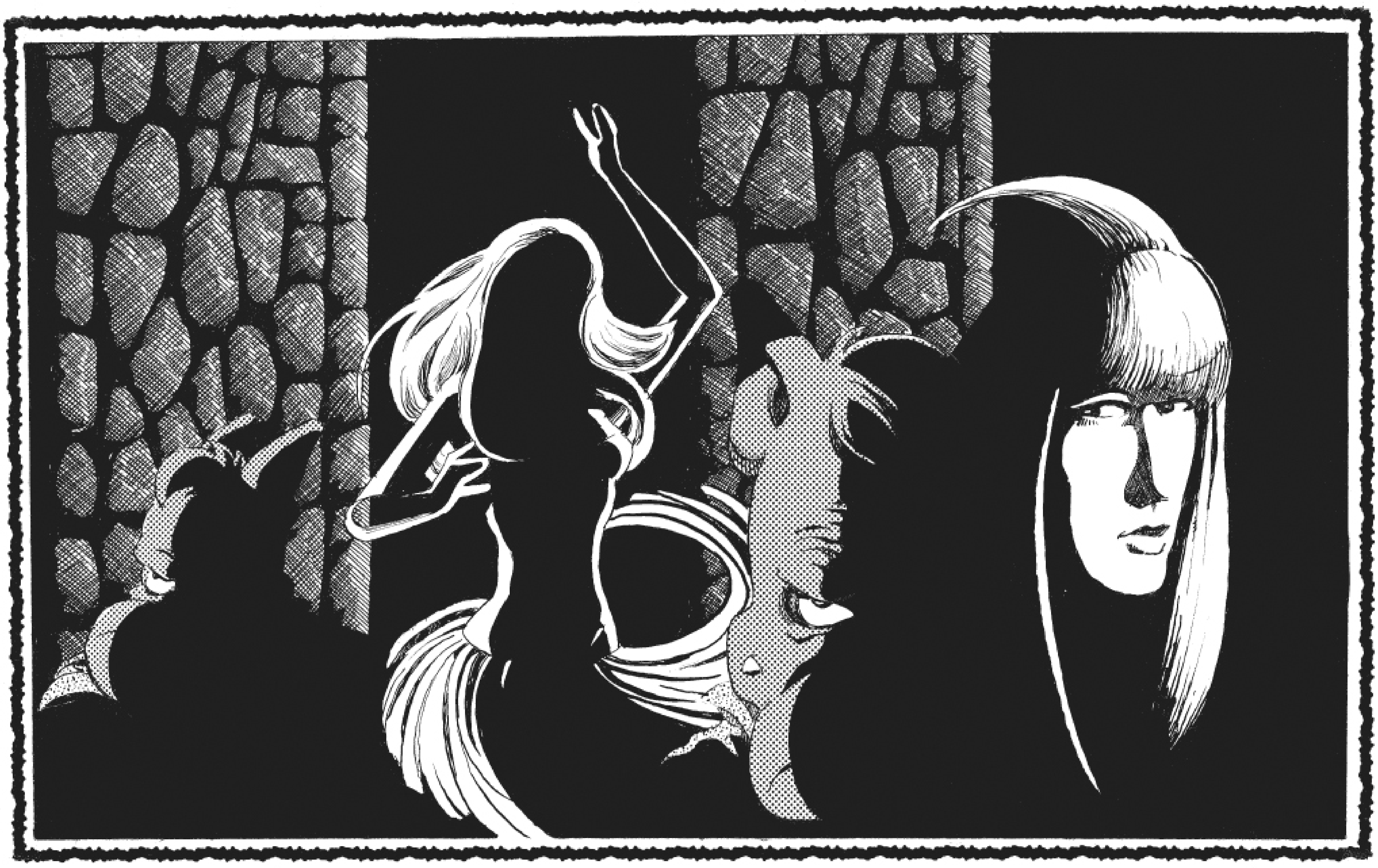

SMASH
CRAK
POP

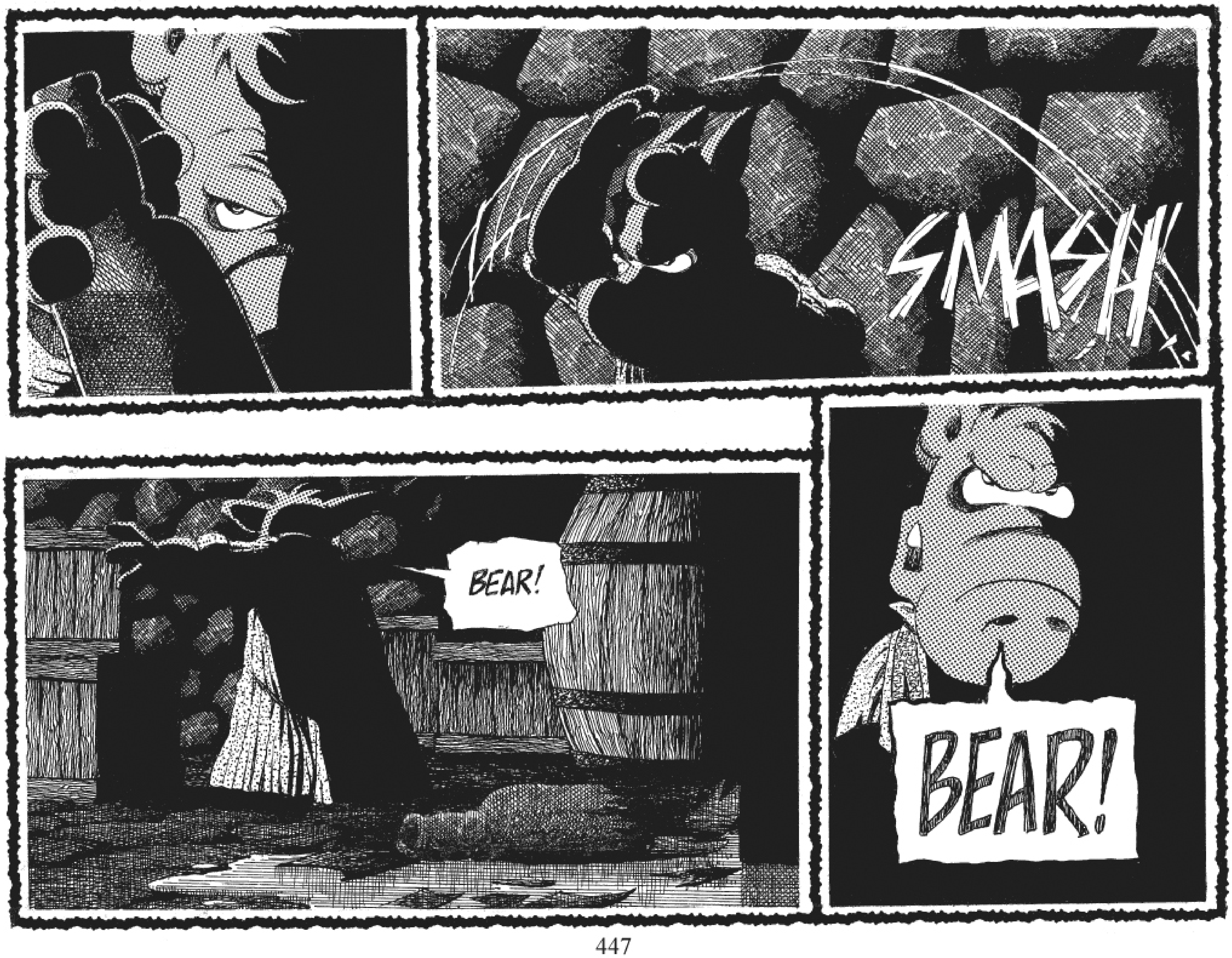

WONDERFUL.
THE BIG ROUND GLOWING WHITE STRANGE THING
LOOK. IT'S LIKE *THIS*...
MOST HOLY'S *WIFE* *LEFT* HIM JUST A FEW MINUTES AGO.
WHICH MEANS MOST HOLY IS GOING TO DRINK THIS *CASE* OF BOREALAN WHISKEY HERE
SO HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE A *NICE* BIG ROUND GLOWING WHITE STRANGE THING--
AND PISS OFF!

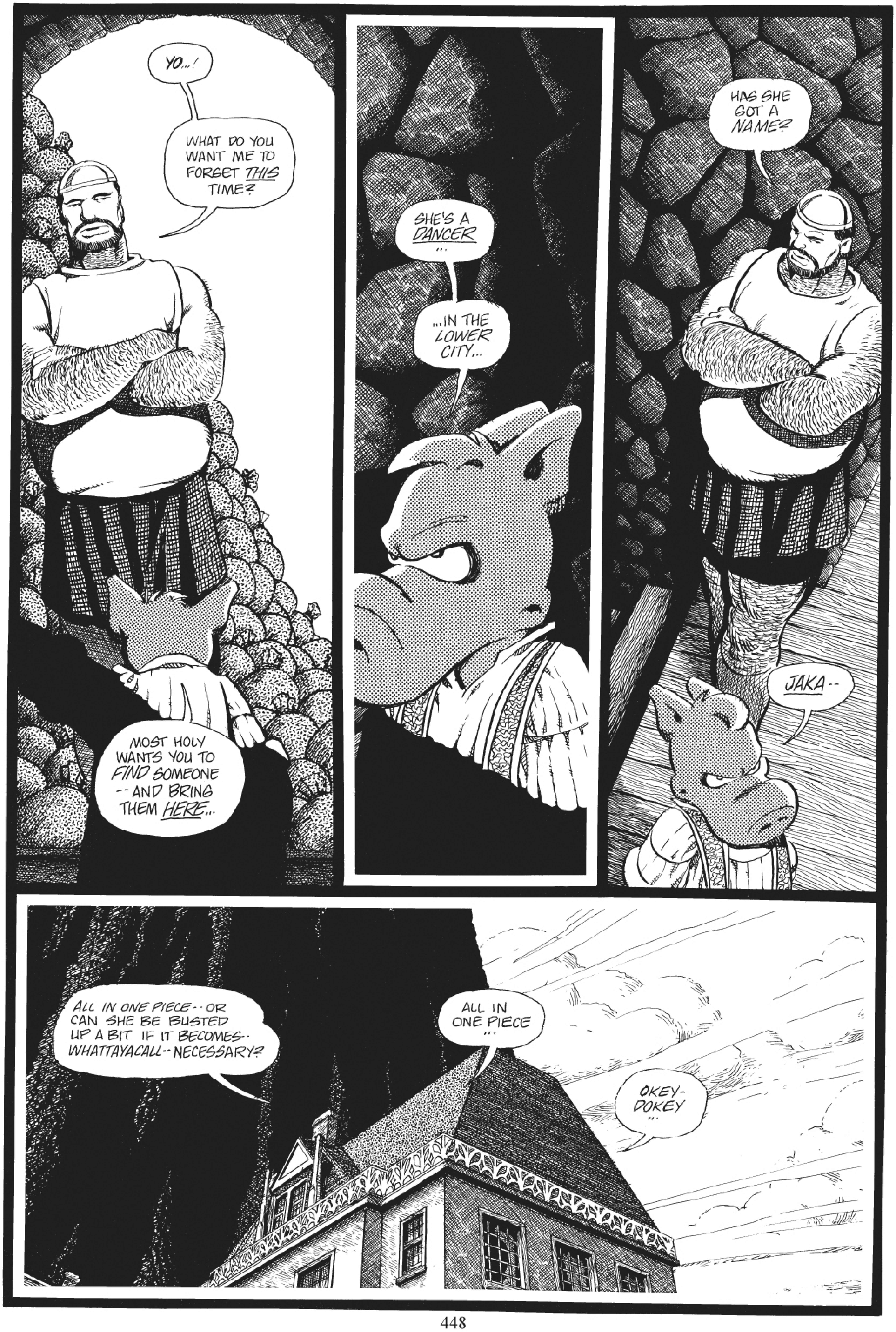

SUCH THEATRICS ...
IT TALKS...
OF COURSE. WHY SHOULD CEREBUS BE SURPRISED
YOU DIDN'T LOVE HER YOU KNOW ...
YOU CAN FORGET IT; MOST HOLY ISN'T LISTENING
YOU DIDN'T EVEN LIKE HER MUCH IF IT COMES RIGHT DOWN TO IT...
DIDN'T YOU HEAR WHAT CEREBUS SAID?
MOST HOLY ISN'T LISTENING

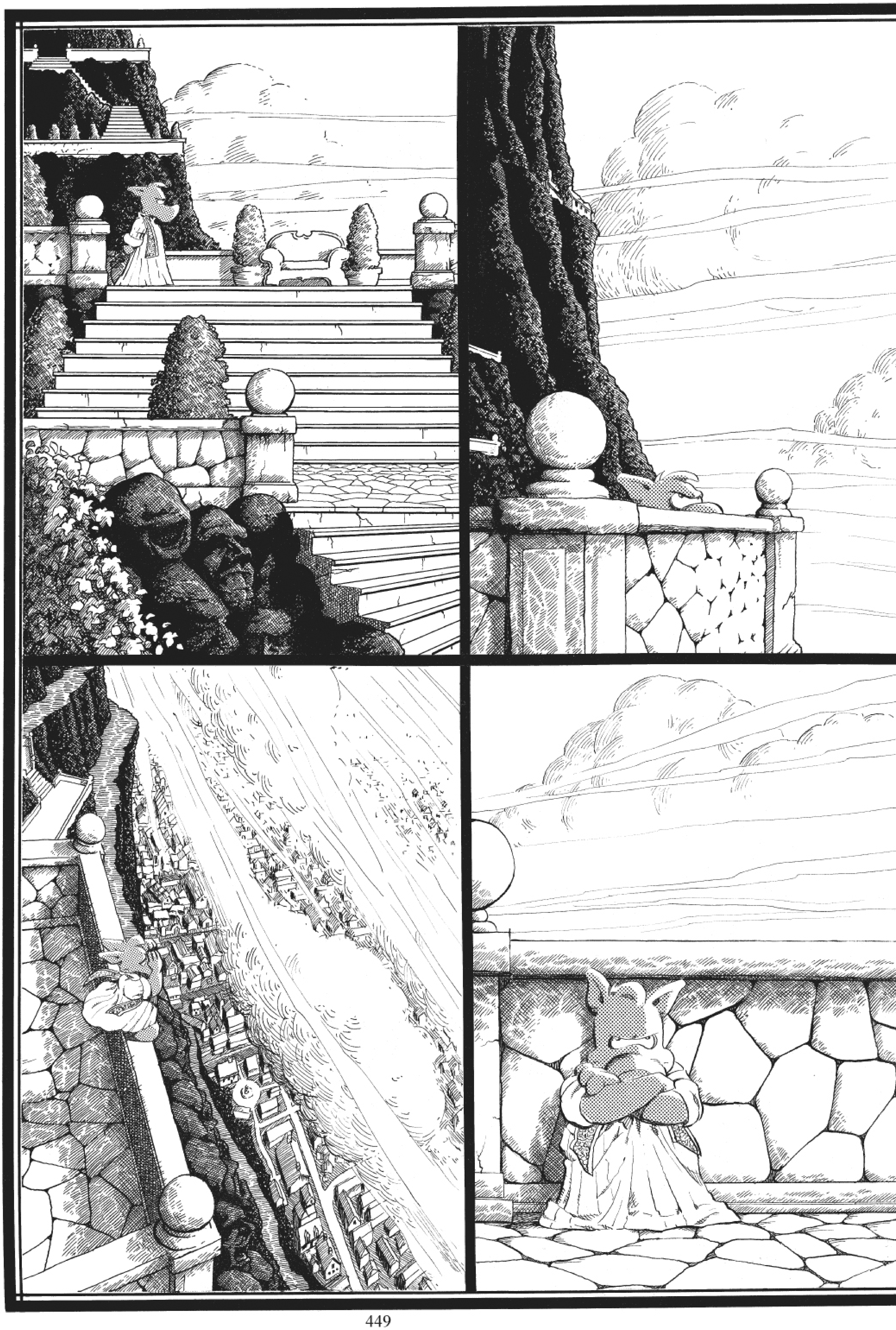

THE ONE YOU WANT IS IN THE LOWER CITY...
DANCING.

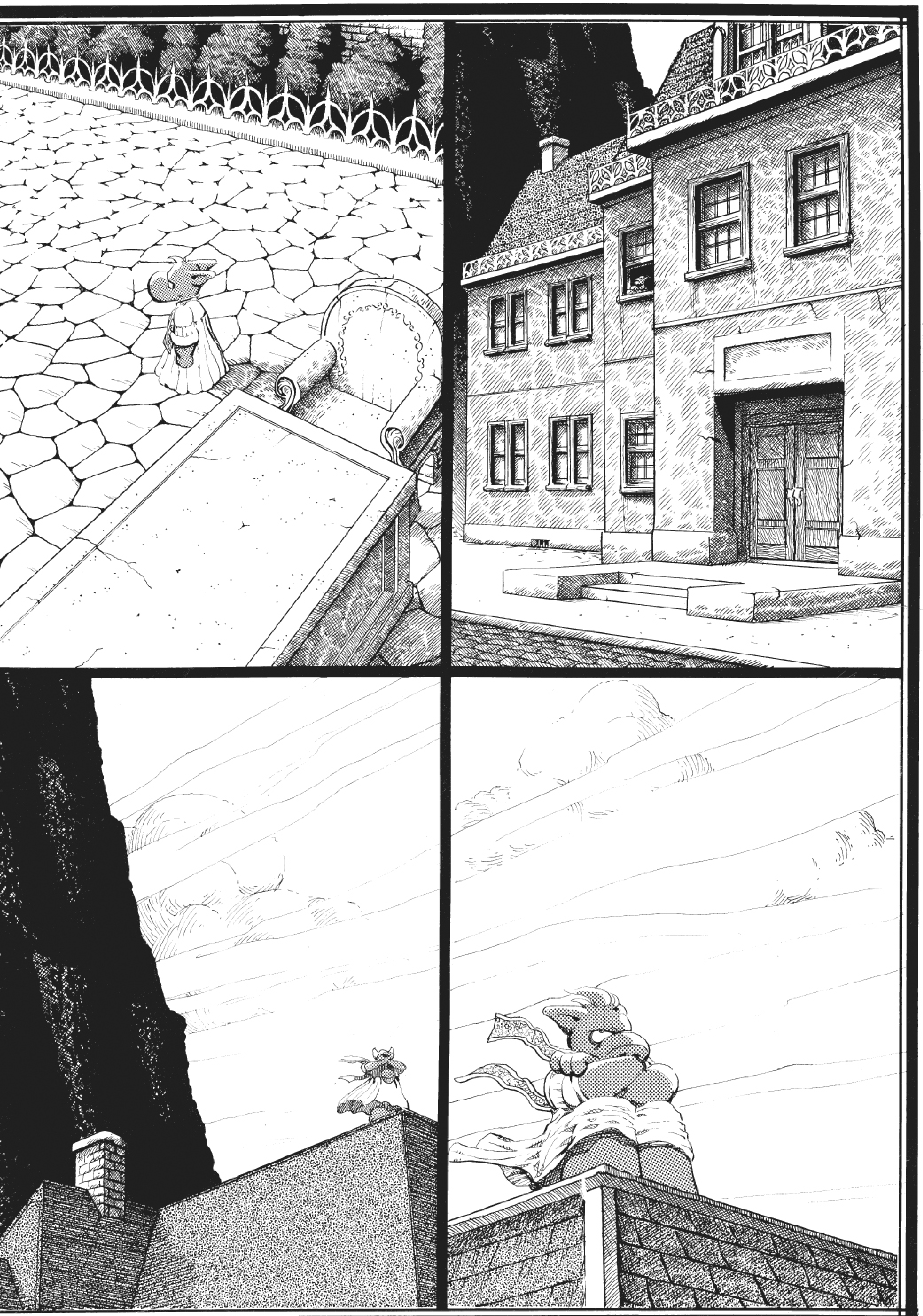


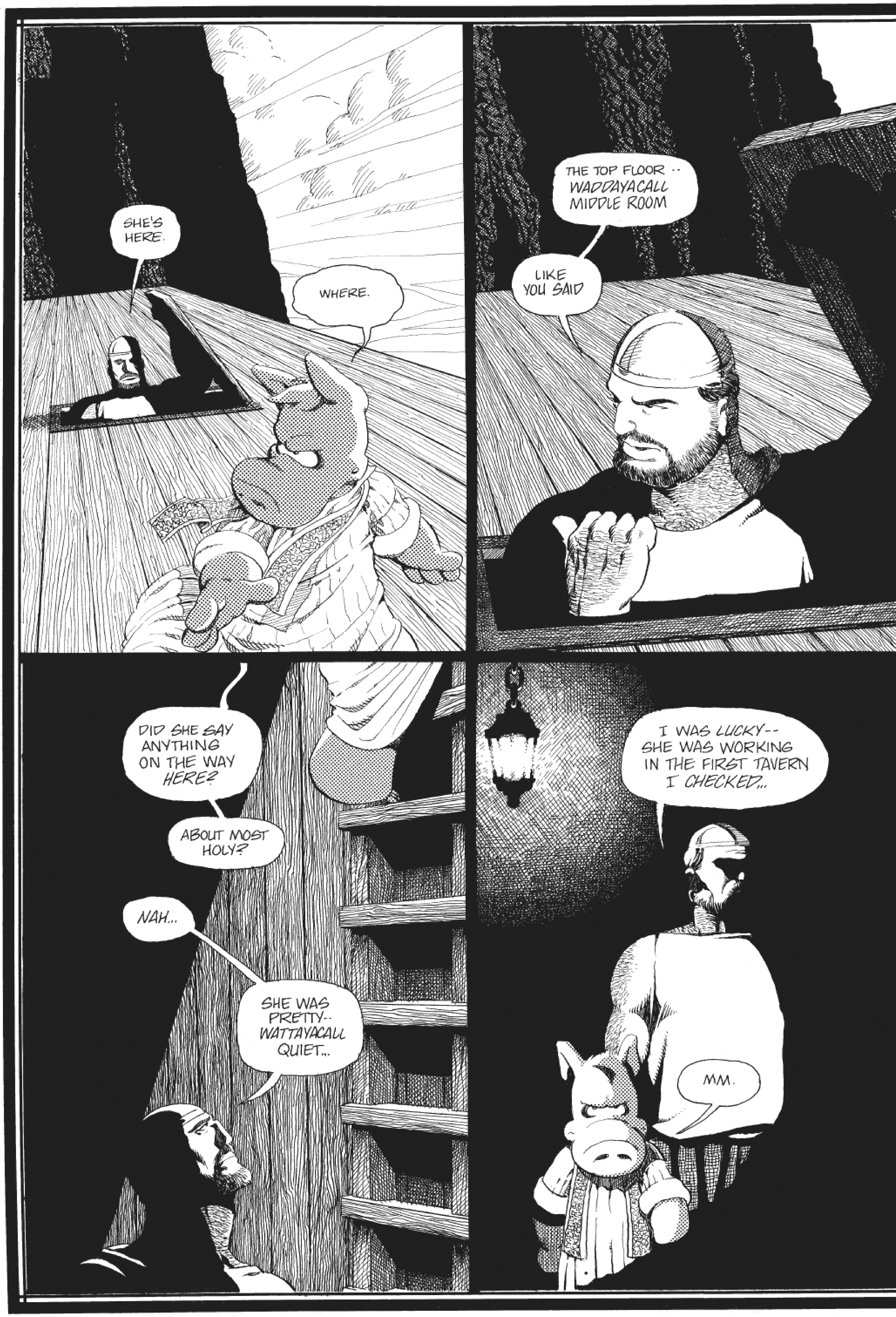


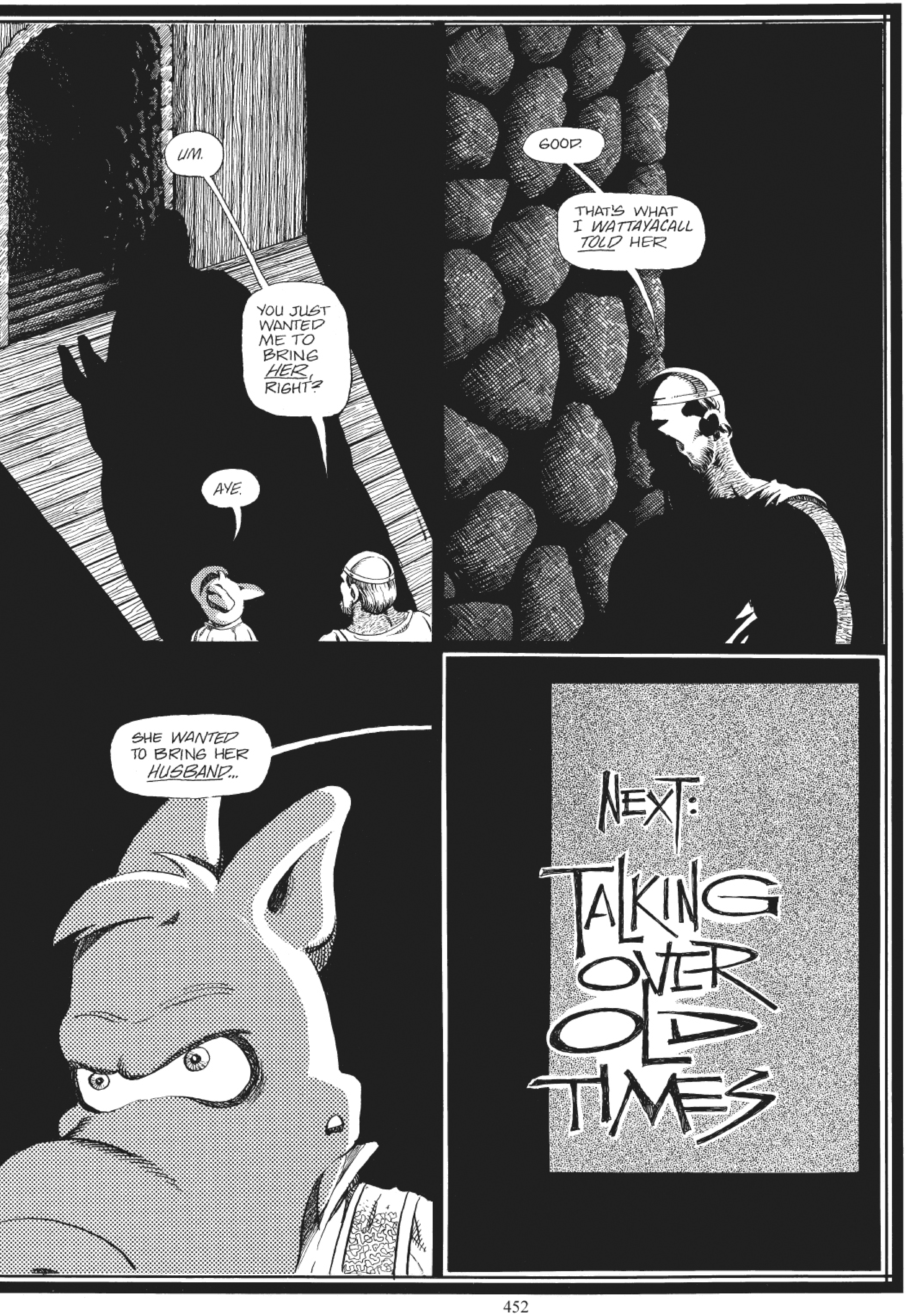

SMASH!
BEAR!
BEAR!


YO...!
WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO FORGET *THIS* TIME?
MOST HOLY WANTS YOU TO *FIND* SOMEONE --AND BRING THEM *HERE*...
SHE'S A *DANCER* ...
...IN THE *LOWER CITY*...
HAS SHE GOT A *NAME*?
JAKA--
ALL IN ONE PIECE--OR CAN SHE BE BUSTED UP A BIT IF IT BECOMES--WHATTAYACALL--NECESSARY?
ALL IN ONE PIECE ...
OKEY-DOKEY ...

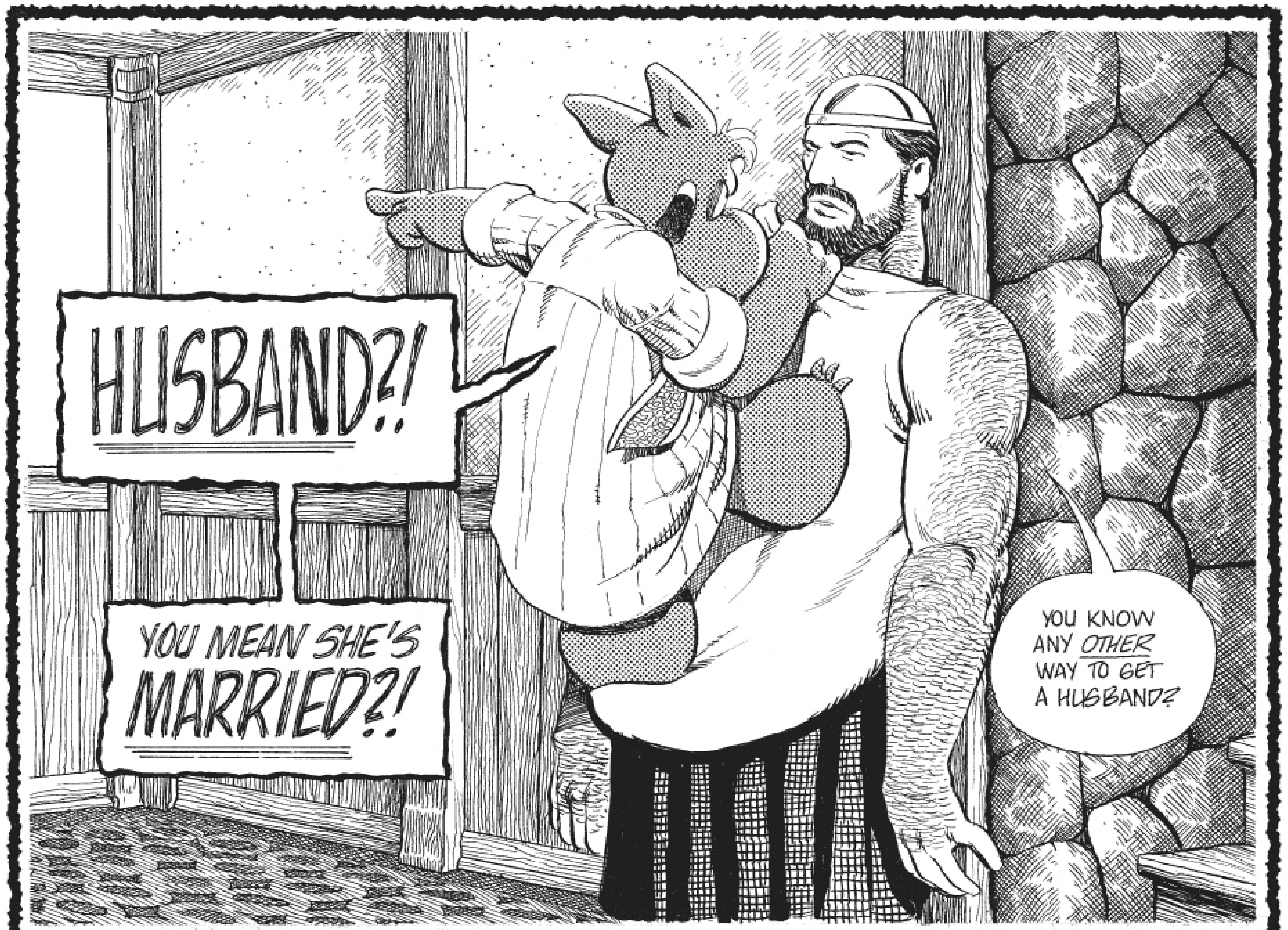


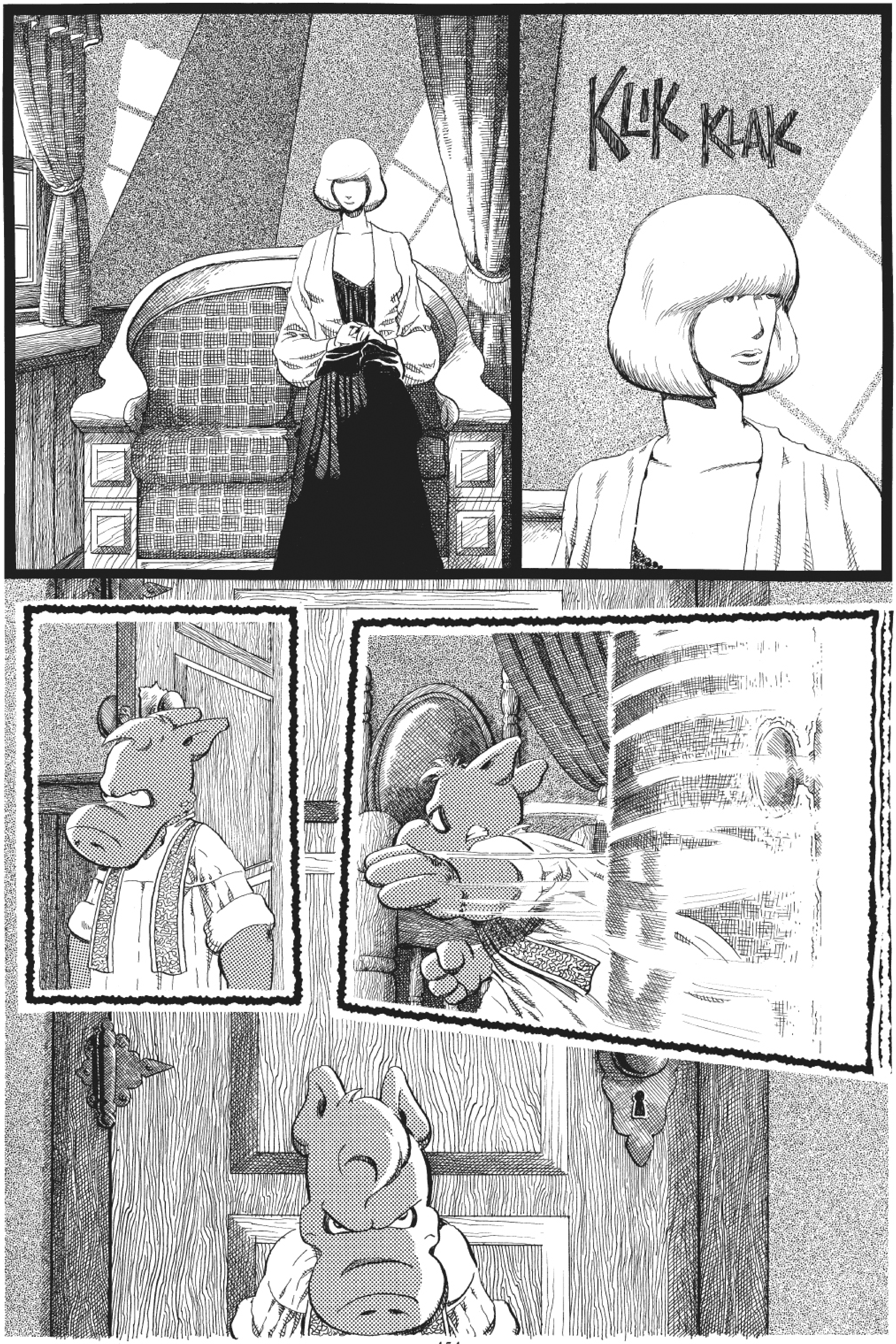


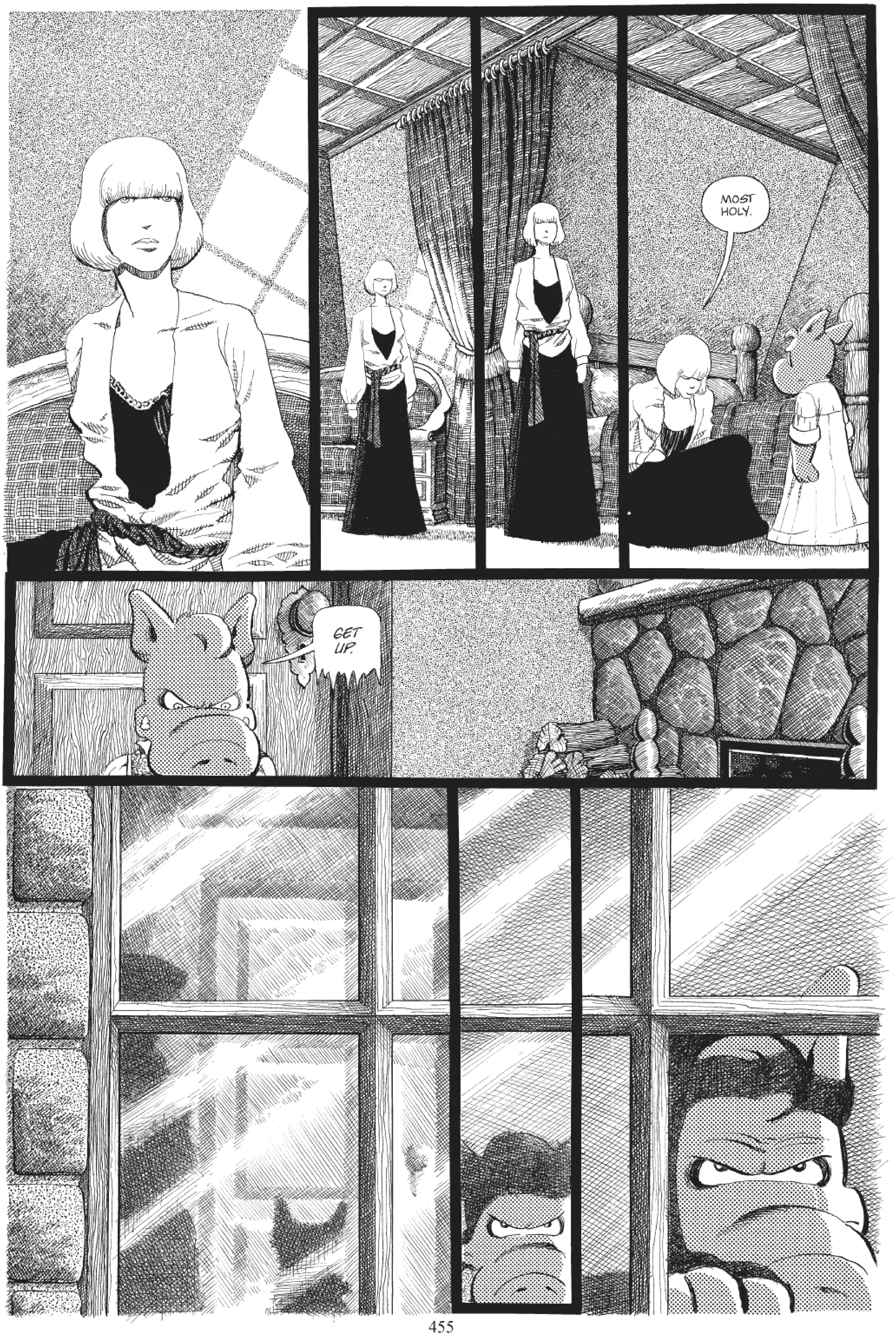

SHE'S HERE.
WHERE.
THE TOP FLOOR -- *WADDAYACALL* MIDDLE ROOM
LIKE YOU SAID
DID SHE *SAY* ANYTHING ON THE WAY *HERE?*
ABOUT MOST HOLY?
NAH...
SHE WAS PRETTY-- *WATTAYACALL* QUIET...
I WAS *LUCKY*-- SHE WAS WORKING IN THE *FIRST* TAVERN I *CHECKED...*
MM.

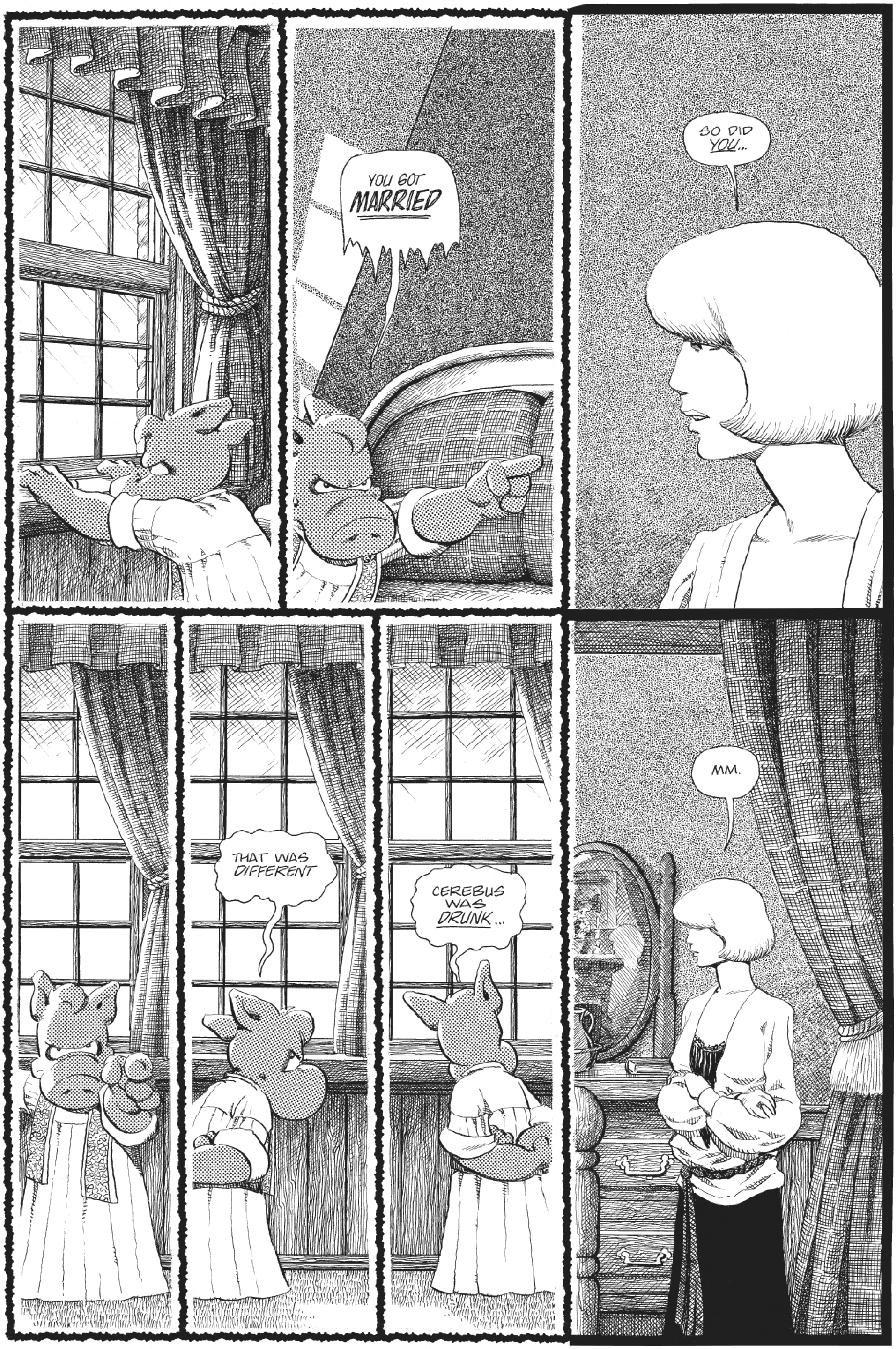

UM.
YOU JUST WANTED ME TO BRING *HER*, RIGHT?
AYE.
GOOD.
THAT'S WHAT I *WATTAYACALL* *TOLD* HER.
SHE *WANTED* TO BRING HER *HUSBAND*...
NEXT:
TALKING OVER OLD TIMES

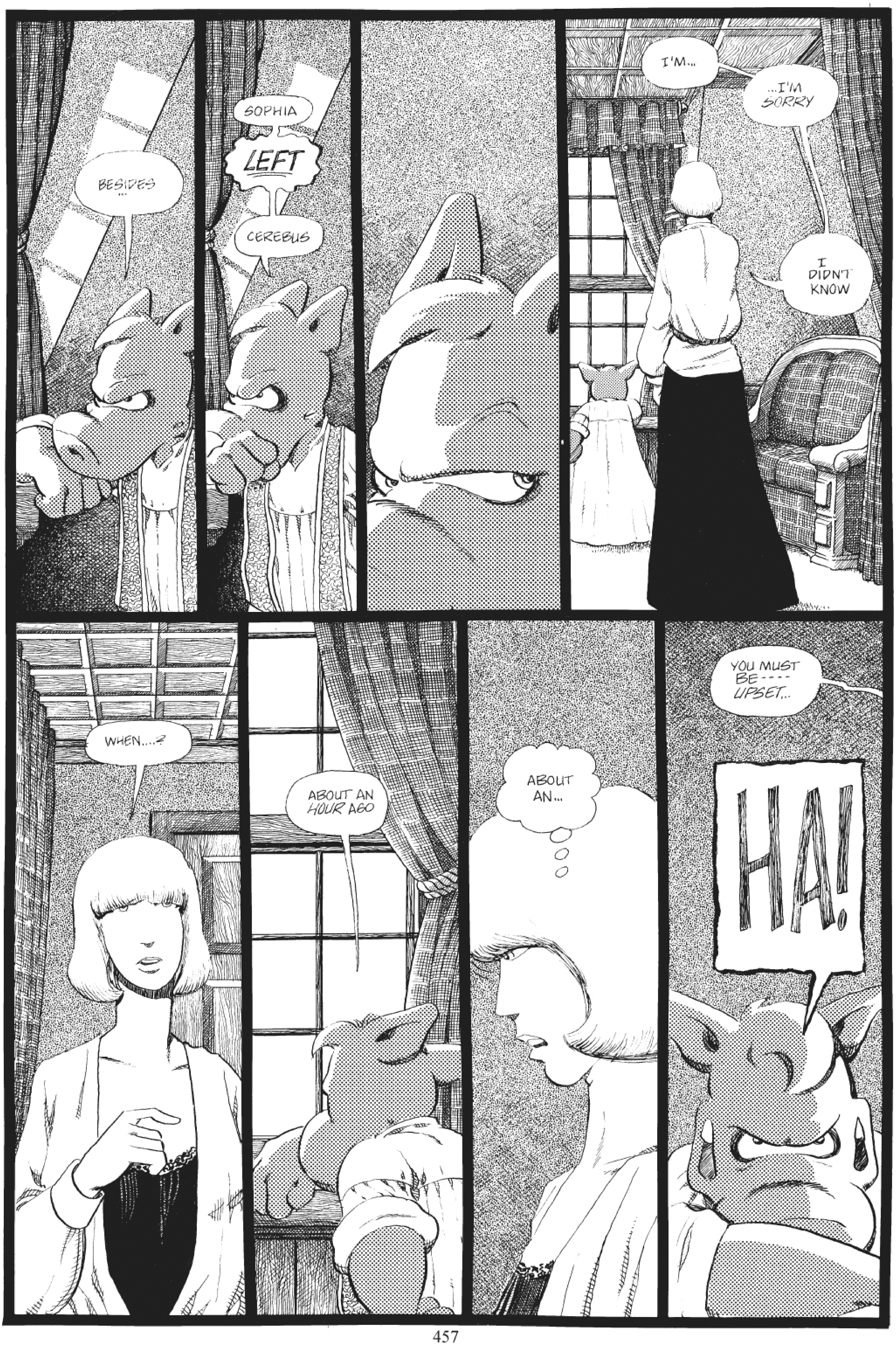
acquired Tastes

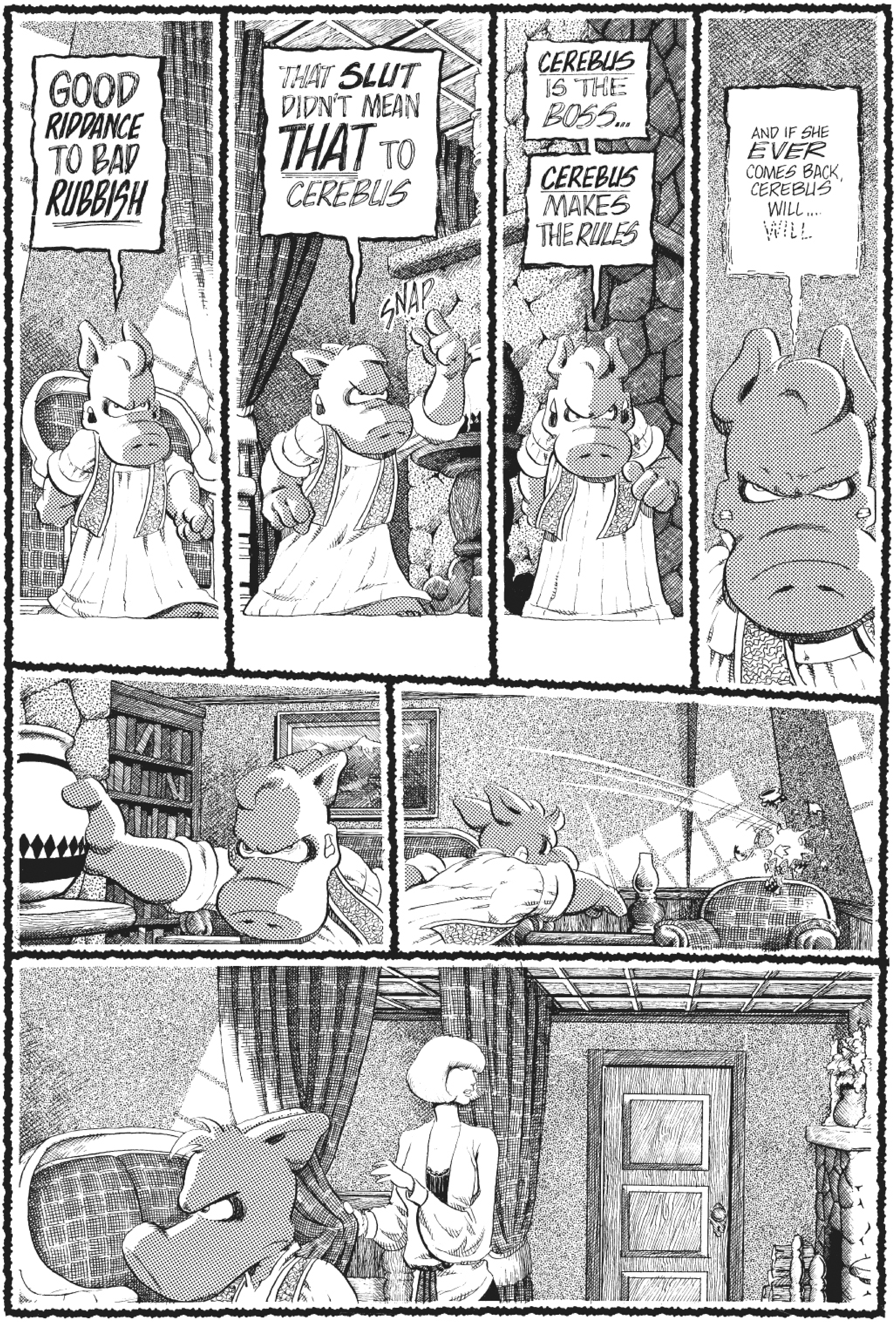

HUSBAND?!
YOU MEAN SHE'S MARRIED?!
YOU KNOW ANY OTHER WAY TO GET A HUSBAND?

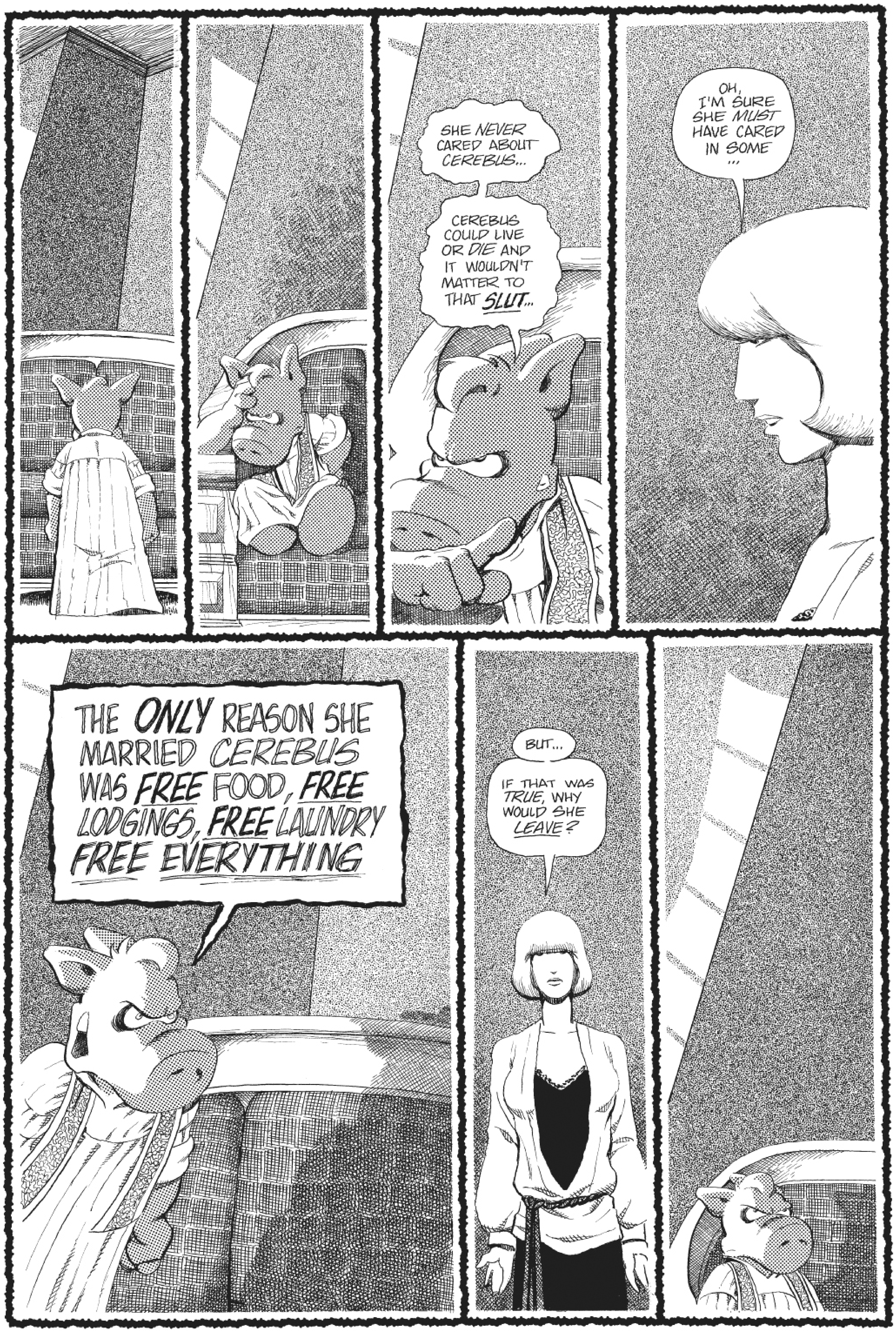

KLIK KLAK

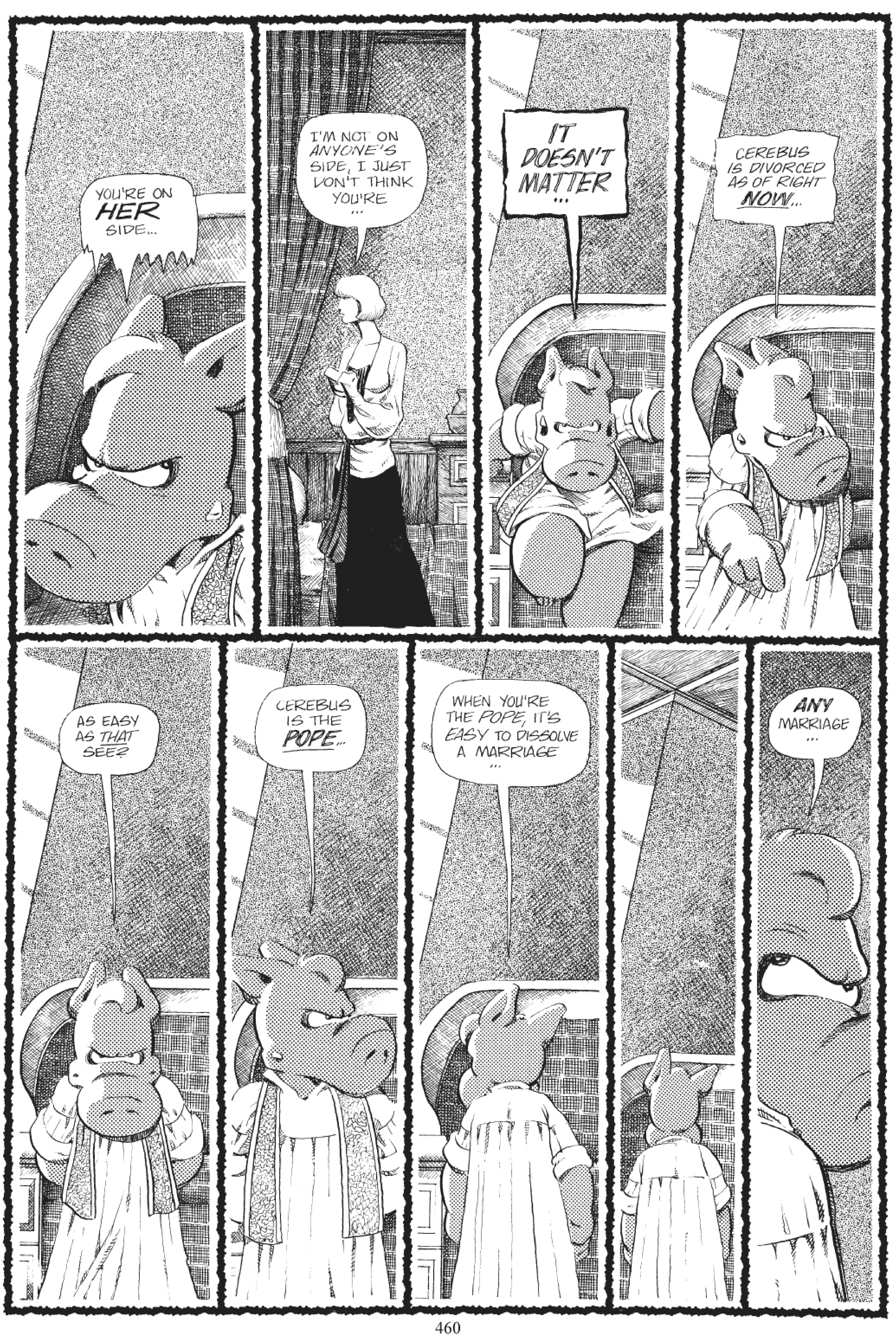

MOST HOLY.
GET UP.

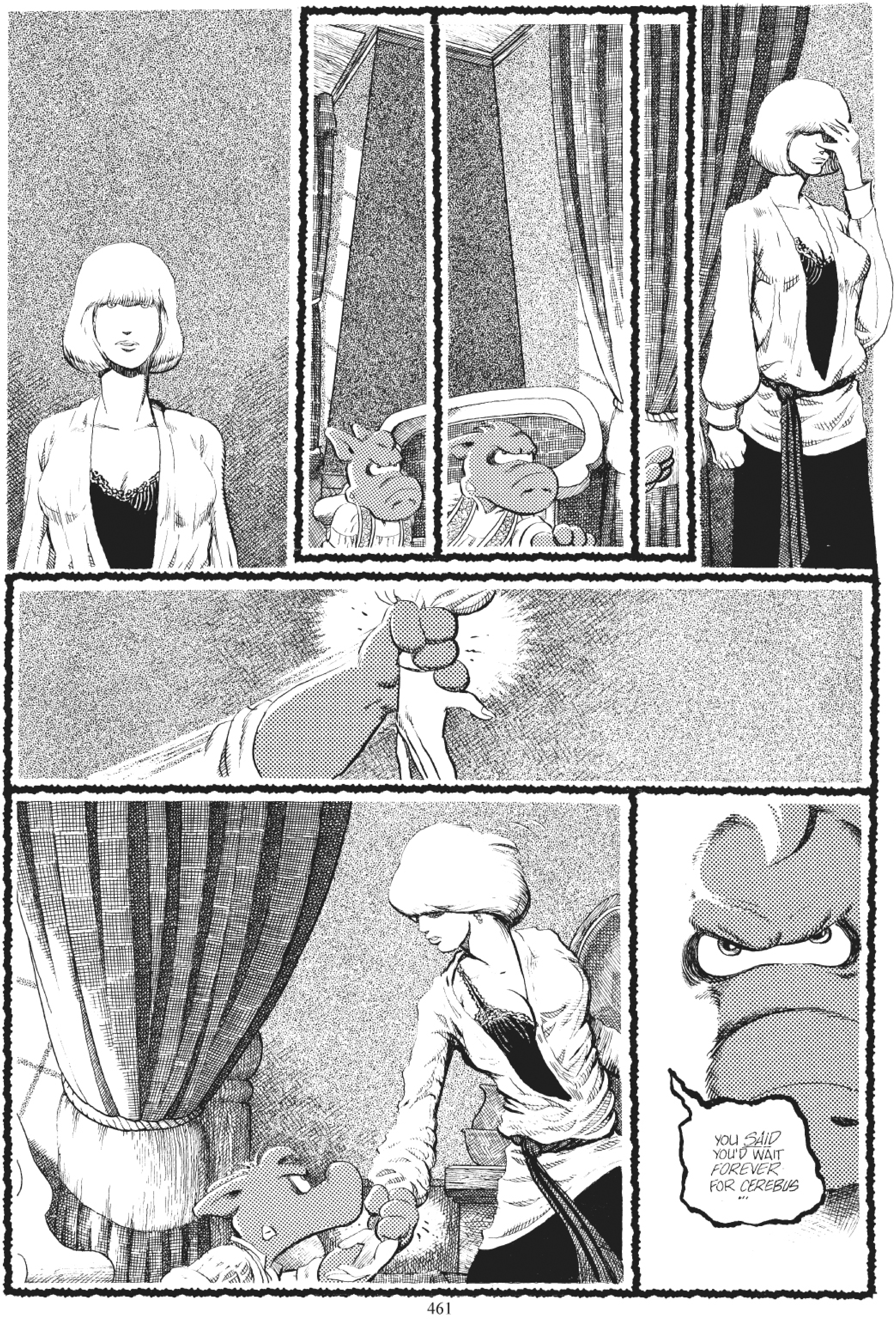

YOU GOT MARRIED
SO DID YOU...
THAT WAS DIFFERENT
CEREBUS WAS DRUNK...
MM.

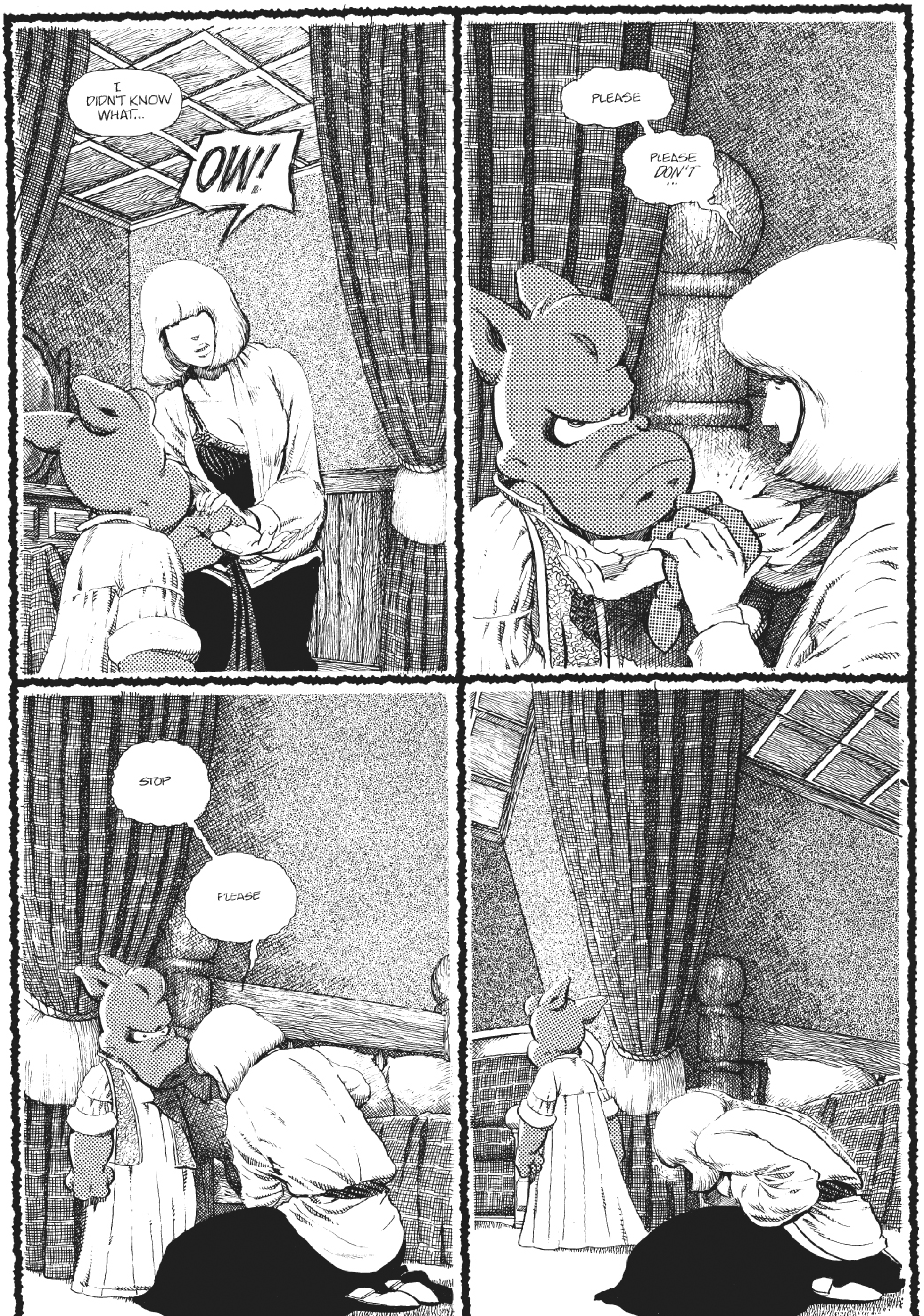

BESIDES ...
SOPHIA
LEFT
CEREBUS
I'M...
...I'M SORRY
I DIDN'T KNOW
WHEN...?
ABOUT AN HOUR AGO
ABOUT AN...
YOU MUST BE---- UPSET...
HA!

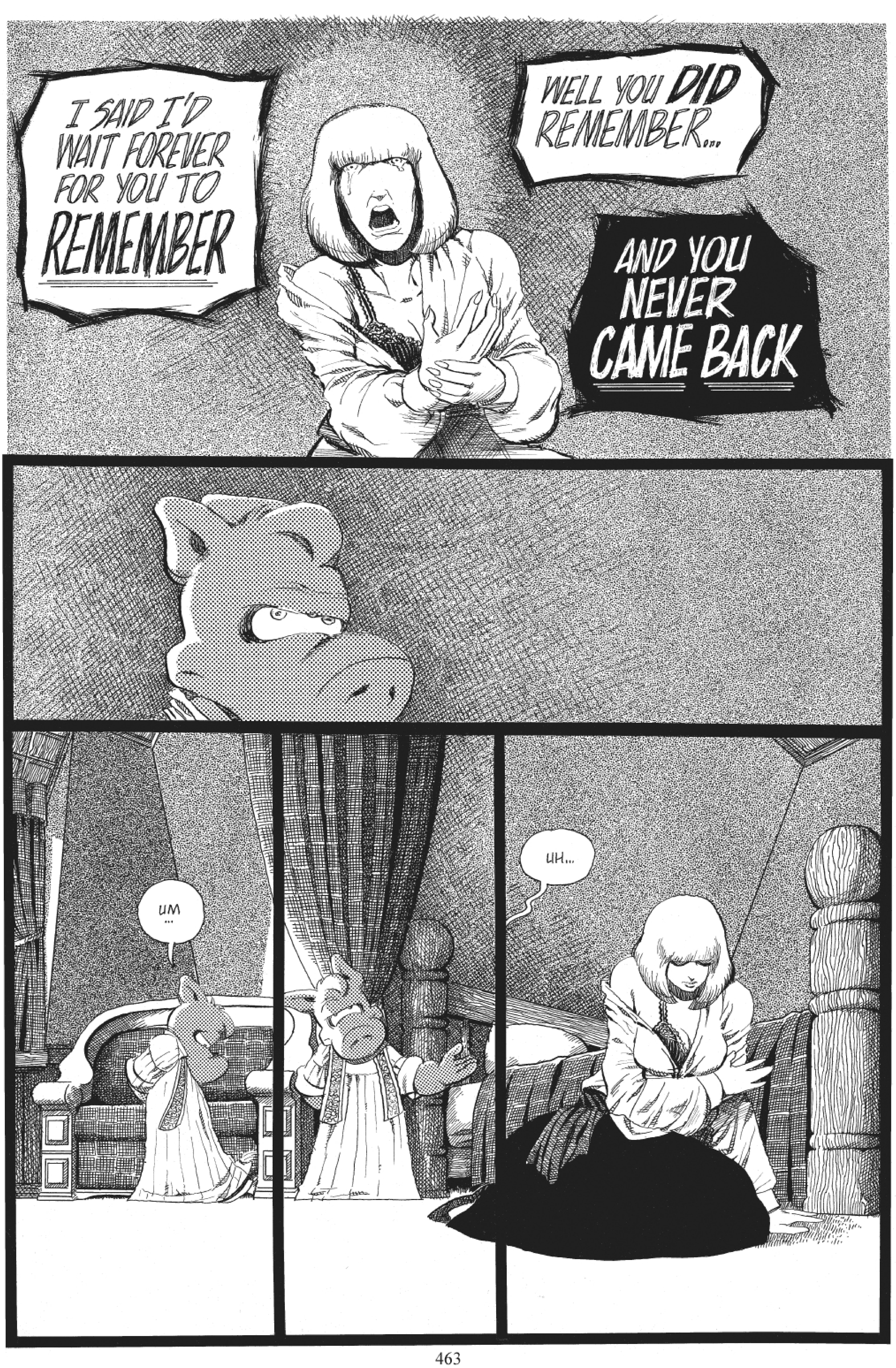

GOOD RIDDANCE TO BAD RUBBISH
THAT SLUT DIDN'T MEAN THAT TO CEREBUS
SNAP
CEREBUS IS THE BOSS...
CEREBUS MAKES THE RULES
AND IF SHE EVER COMES BACK, CEREBUS WILL.... WILL

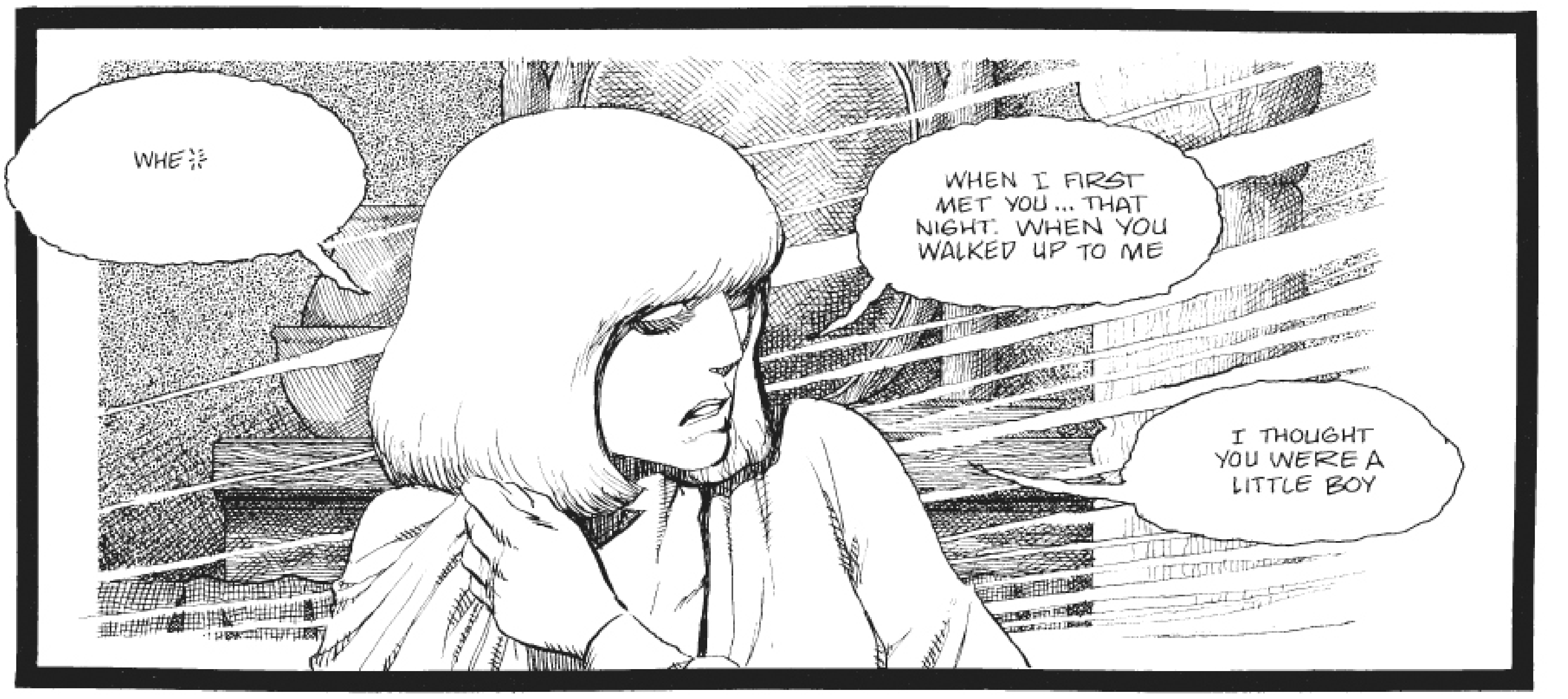

SHE NEVER CARED ABOUT CEREBUS...
CEREBUS COULD LIVE OR DIE AND IT WOULDN'T MATTER TO THAT SLUT...
OH, I'M SURE SHE MUST HAVE CARED IN SOME ...
THE ONLY REASON SHE MARRIED CEREBUS WAS FREE FOOD, FREE LODGINGS, FREE LAUNDRY FREE EVERYTHING
BUT...
IF THAT WAS TRUE, WHY WOULD SHE LEAVE?

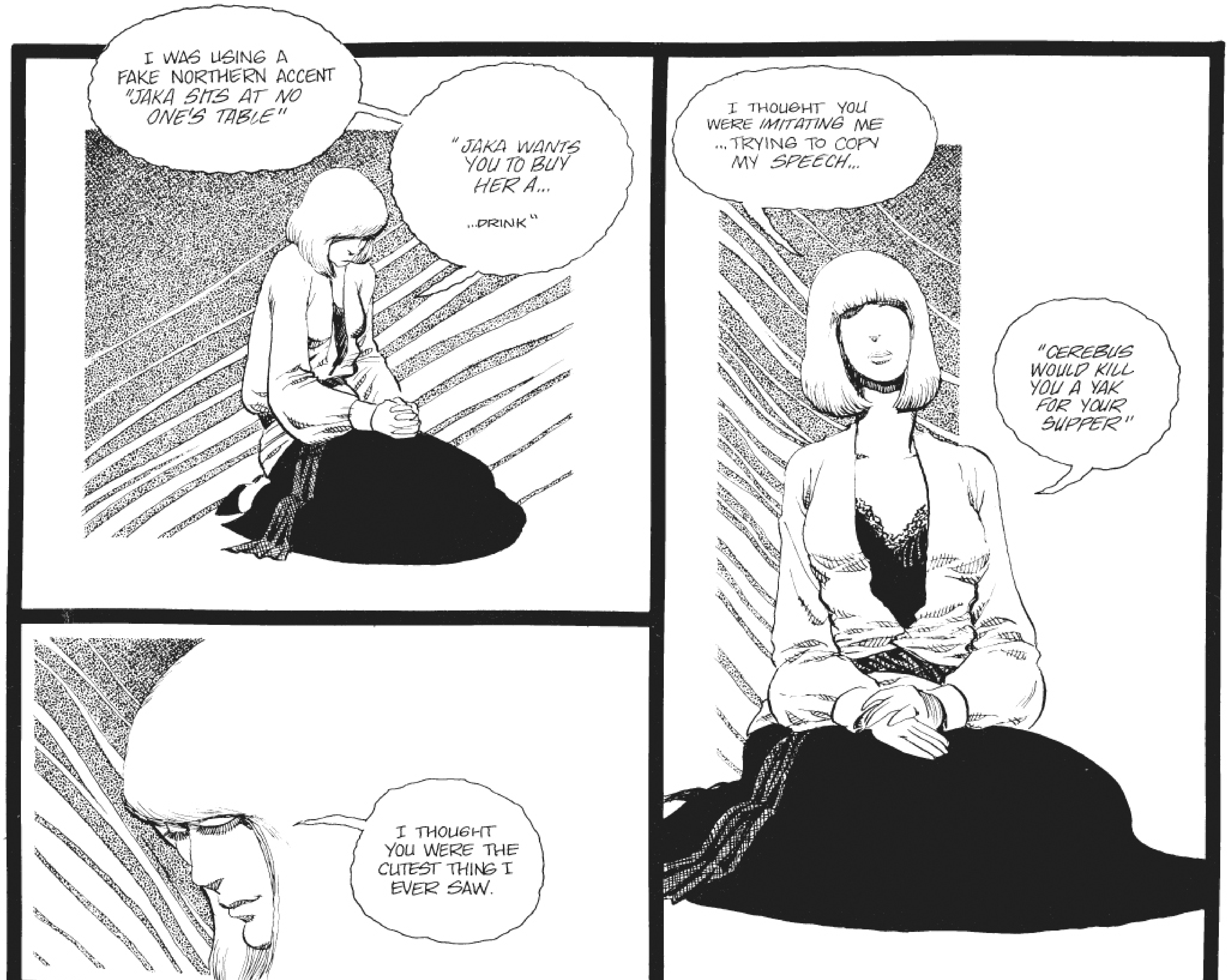

YOU'RE ON **HER** SIDE...
I'M NOT ON *ANYONE'S* SIDE, I JUST DON'T THINK YOU'RE ...
IT DOESN'T **MATTER** ...
CEREBUS IS DIVORCED *AS OF RIGHT* ***NOW***...
AS EASY AS *THAT* SEE?
CEREBUS IS THE ***POPE***...
WHEN YOU'RE THE *POPE*, IT'S *EASY* TO DISSOLVE A MARRIAGE ...
ANY MARRIAGE ...

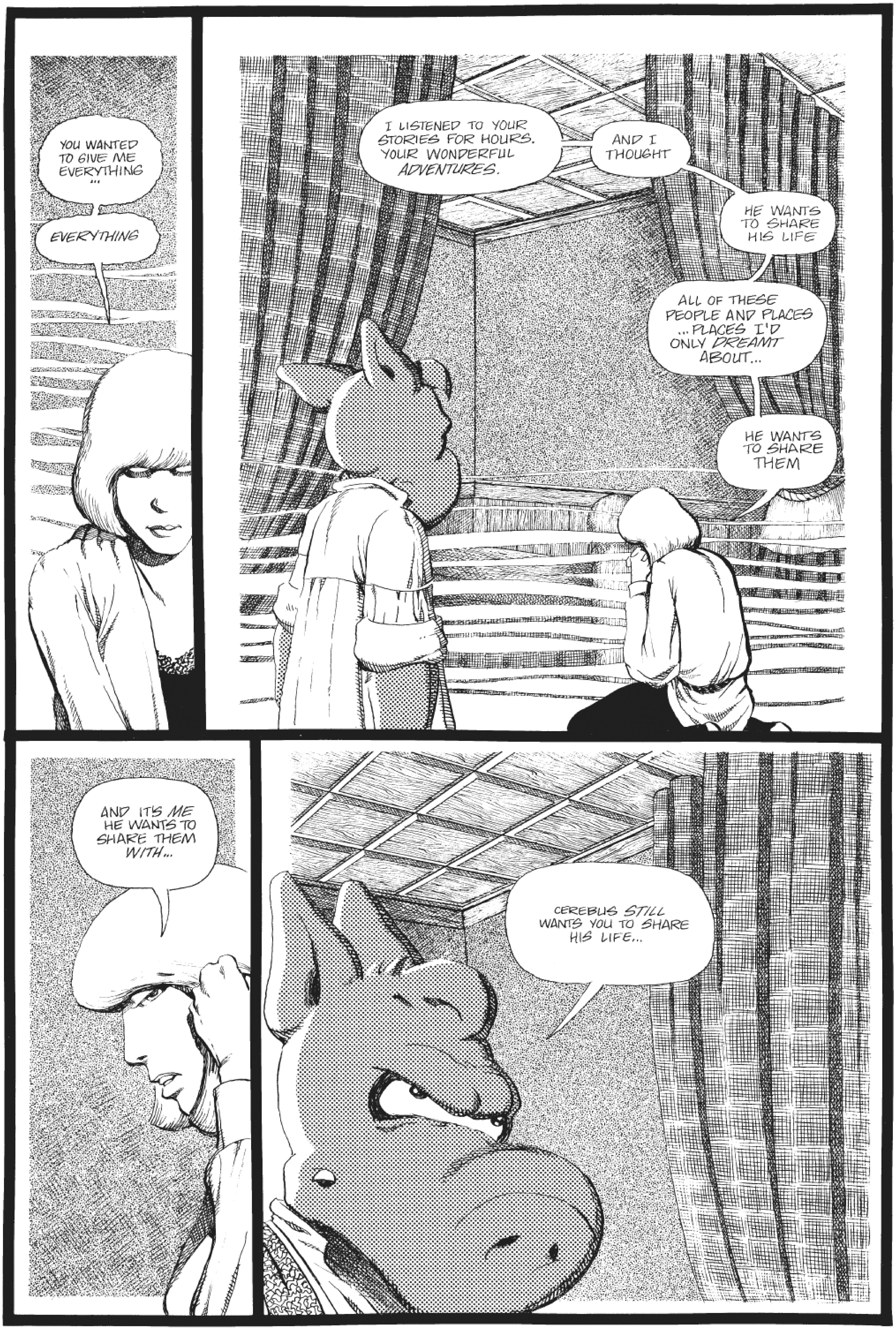

YOU SAID YOU'D WAIT FOREVER FOR CEREBUS ...

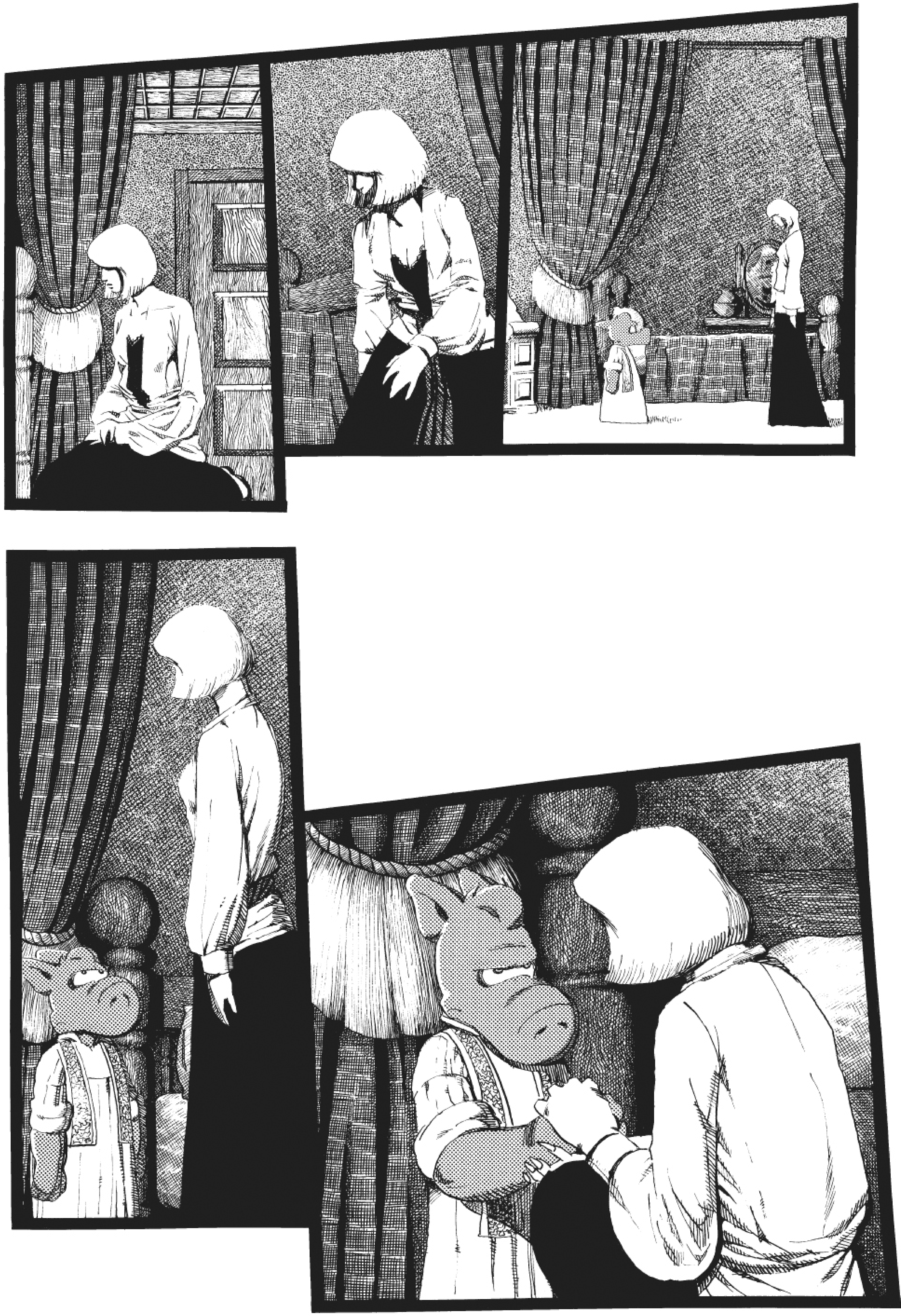

I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT...
OW!
PLEASE
PLEASE DON'T ...
STOP
PLEASE

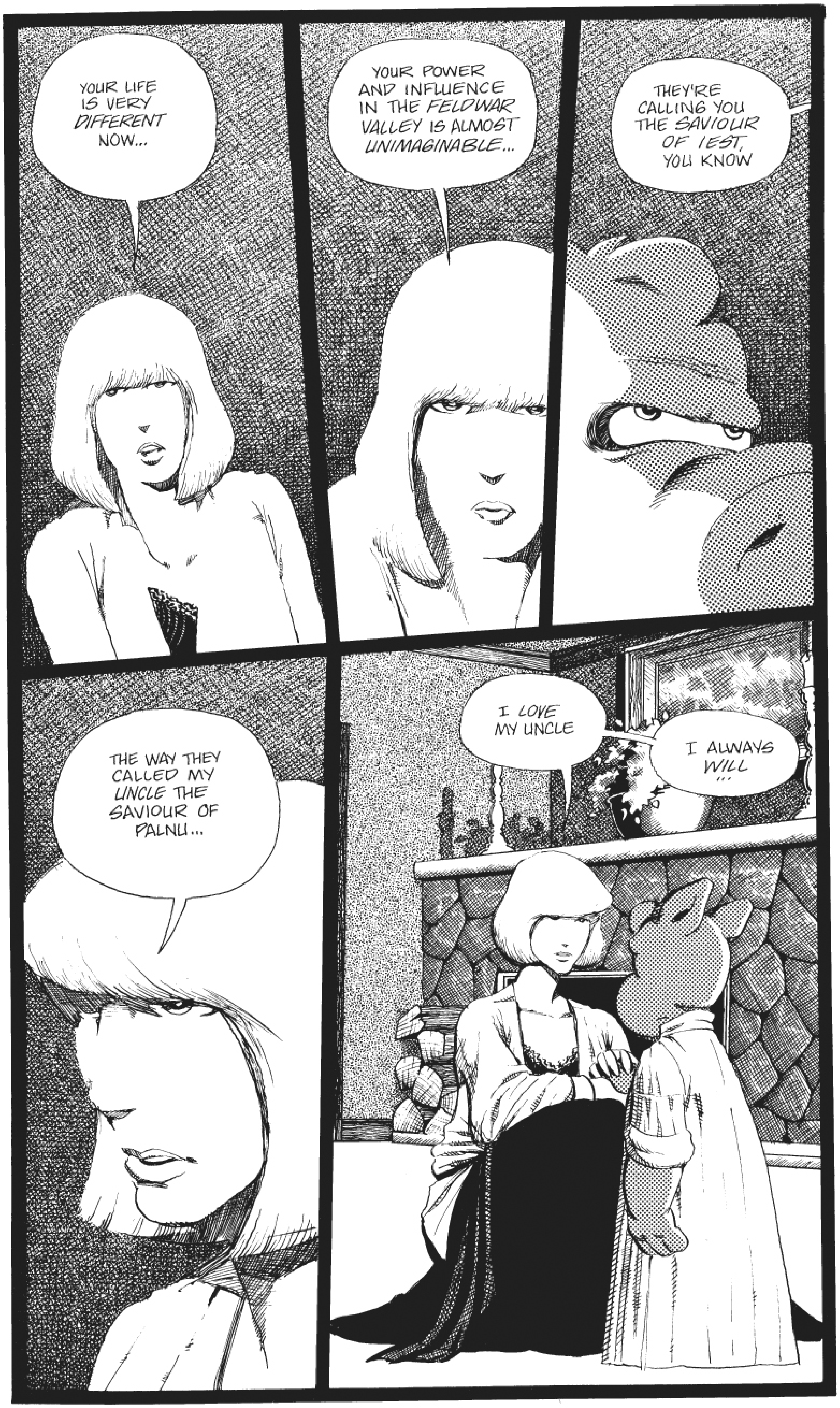

I SAID I'D WAIT FOREVER FOR YOU TO REMEMBER
WELL YOU DID REMEMBER...
AND YOU NEVER CAME BACK
UM ...
UH...

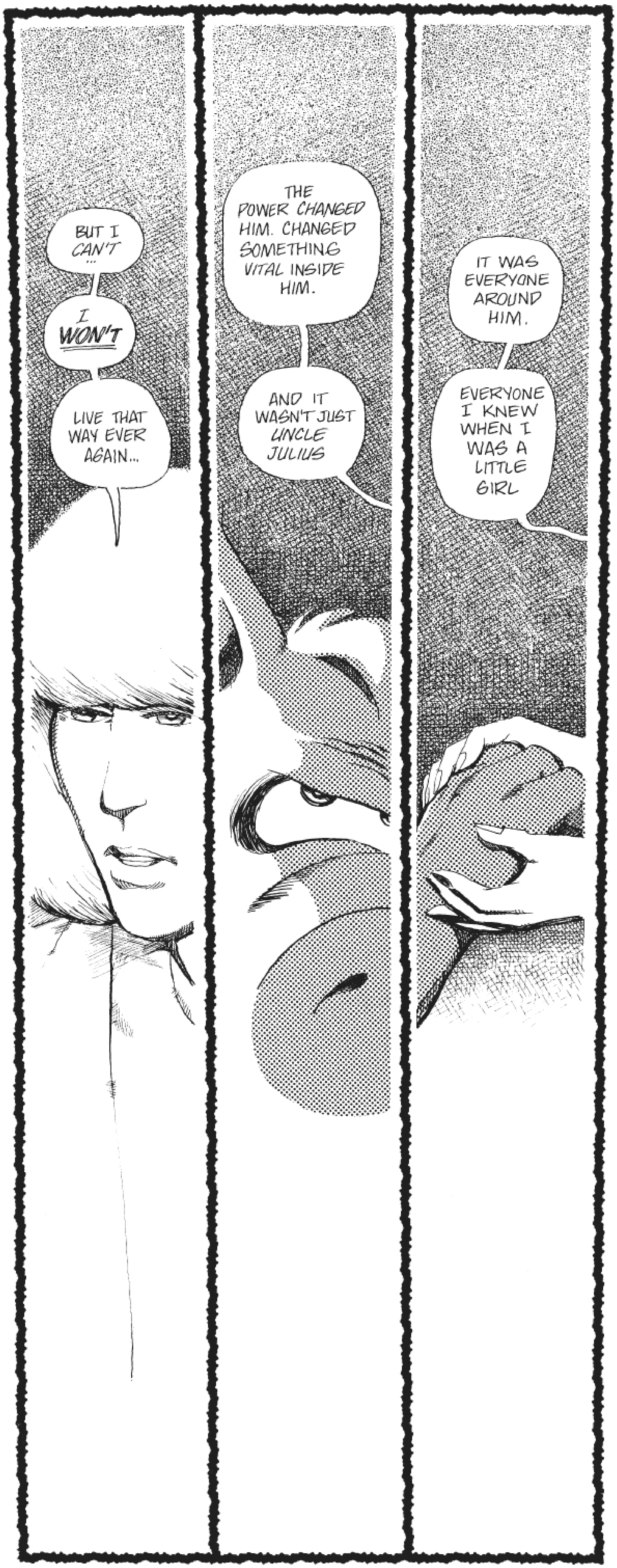

WHE
WHEN I FIRST MET YOU... THAT NIGHT. WHEN YOU WALKED UP TO ME
I THOUGHT YOU WERE A LITTLE BOY

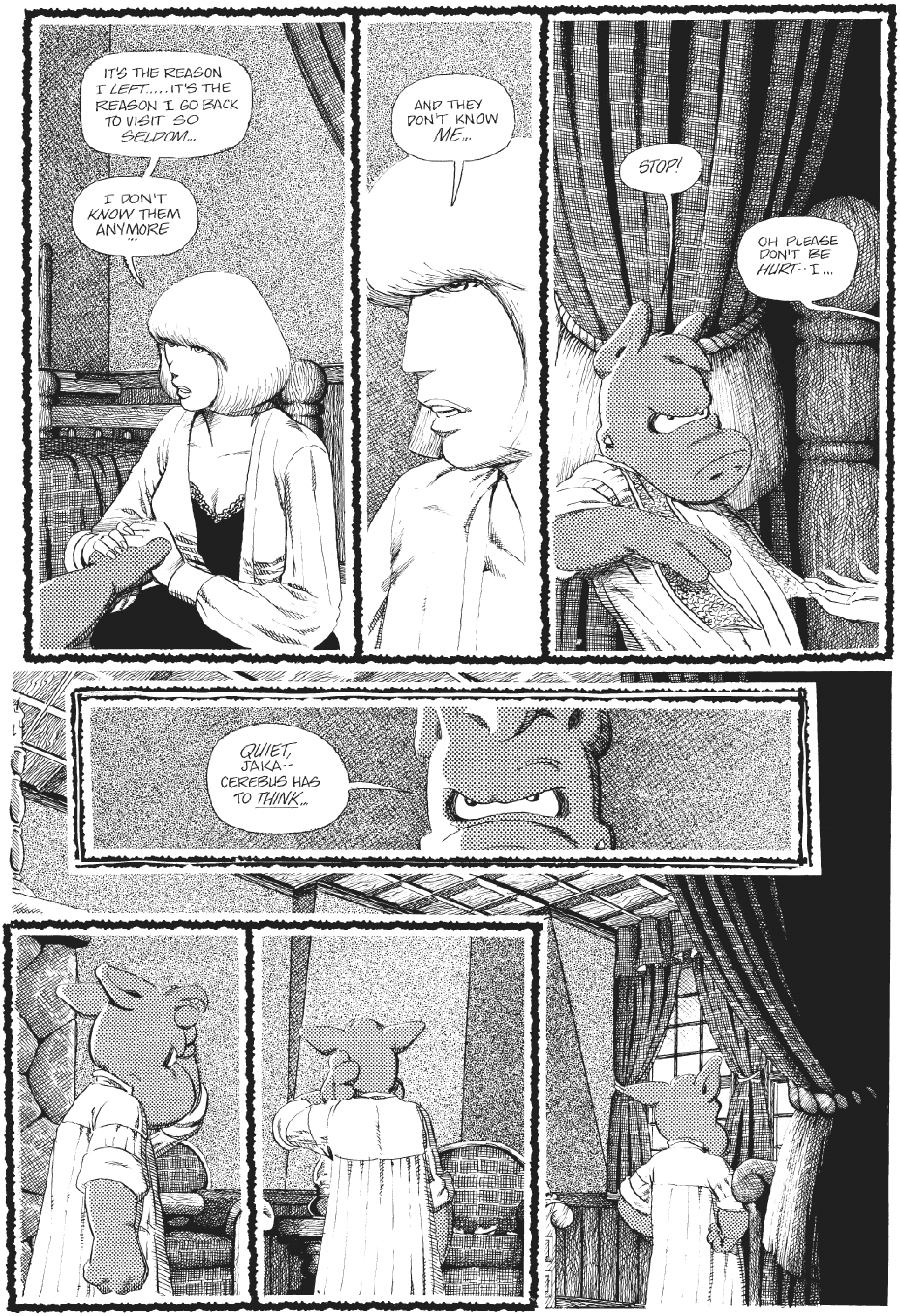

I WAS USING A FAKE NORTHERN ACCENT "JAKA SITS AT NO ONE'S TABLE"
"JAKA WANTS YOU TO BUY HER A... ...DRINK"
I THOUGHT YOU WERE IMITATING ME ...TRYING TO COPY MY SPEECH...
"CEREBUS WOULD KILL YOU A YAK FOR YOUR SUPPER"
I THOUGHT YOU WERE THE CUTEST THING I EVER SAW.

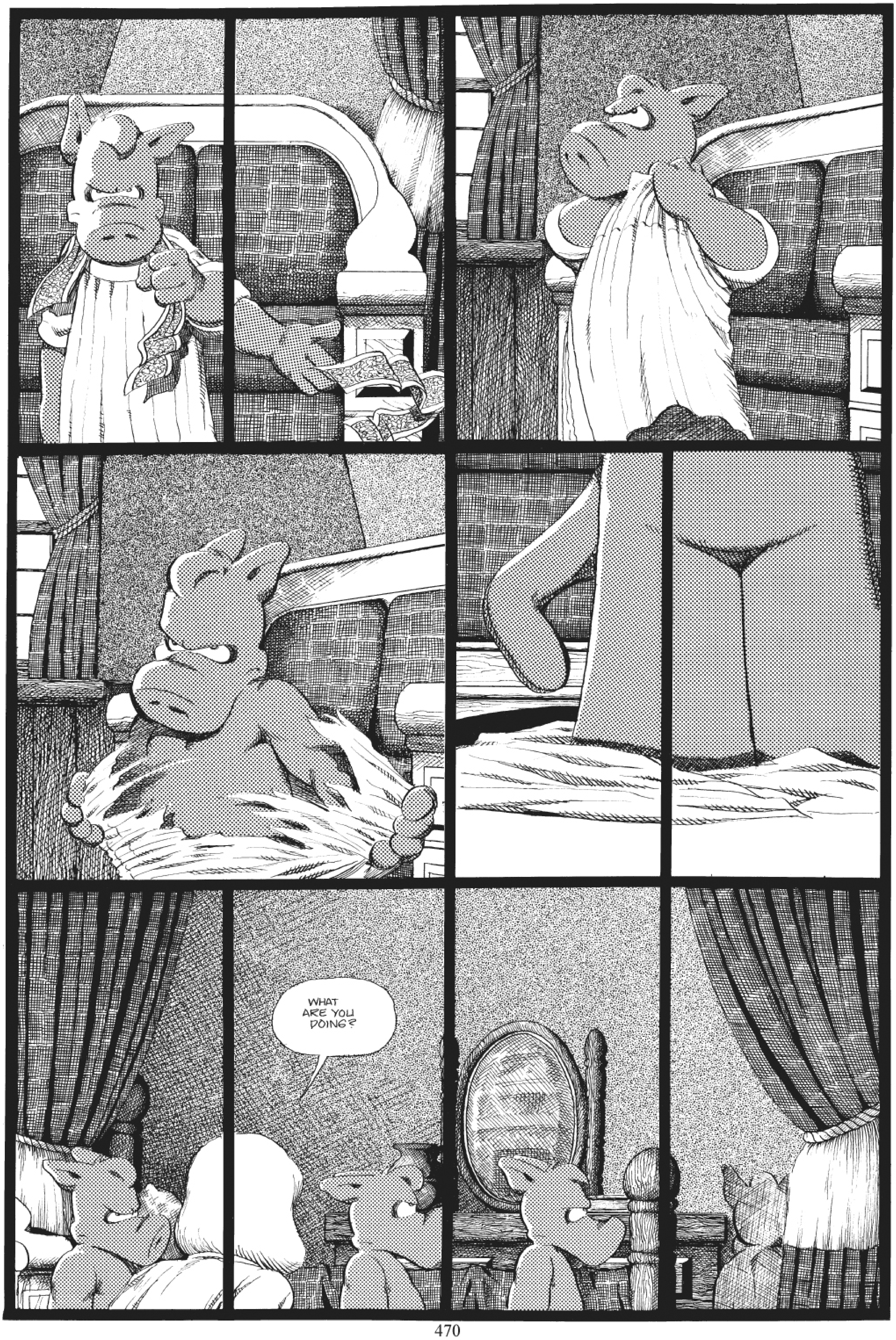

YOU WANTED TO GIVE ME EVERYTHING ...
EVERYTHING
I LISTENED TO YOUR STORIES FOR HOURS. YOUR WONDERFUL *ADVENTURES*.
AND I THOUGHT
HE WANTS TO SHARE HIS LIFE
ALL OF THESE PEOPLE AND PLACES ...PLACES I'D ONLY *DREAMT* ABOUT...
HE WANTS TO SHARE THEM
AND IT'S *ME* HE WANTS TO SHARE THEM *WITH*...
CEREBUS *STILL* WANTS YOU TO SHARE HIS LIFE...

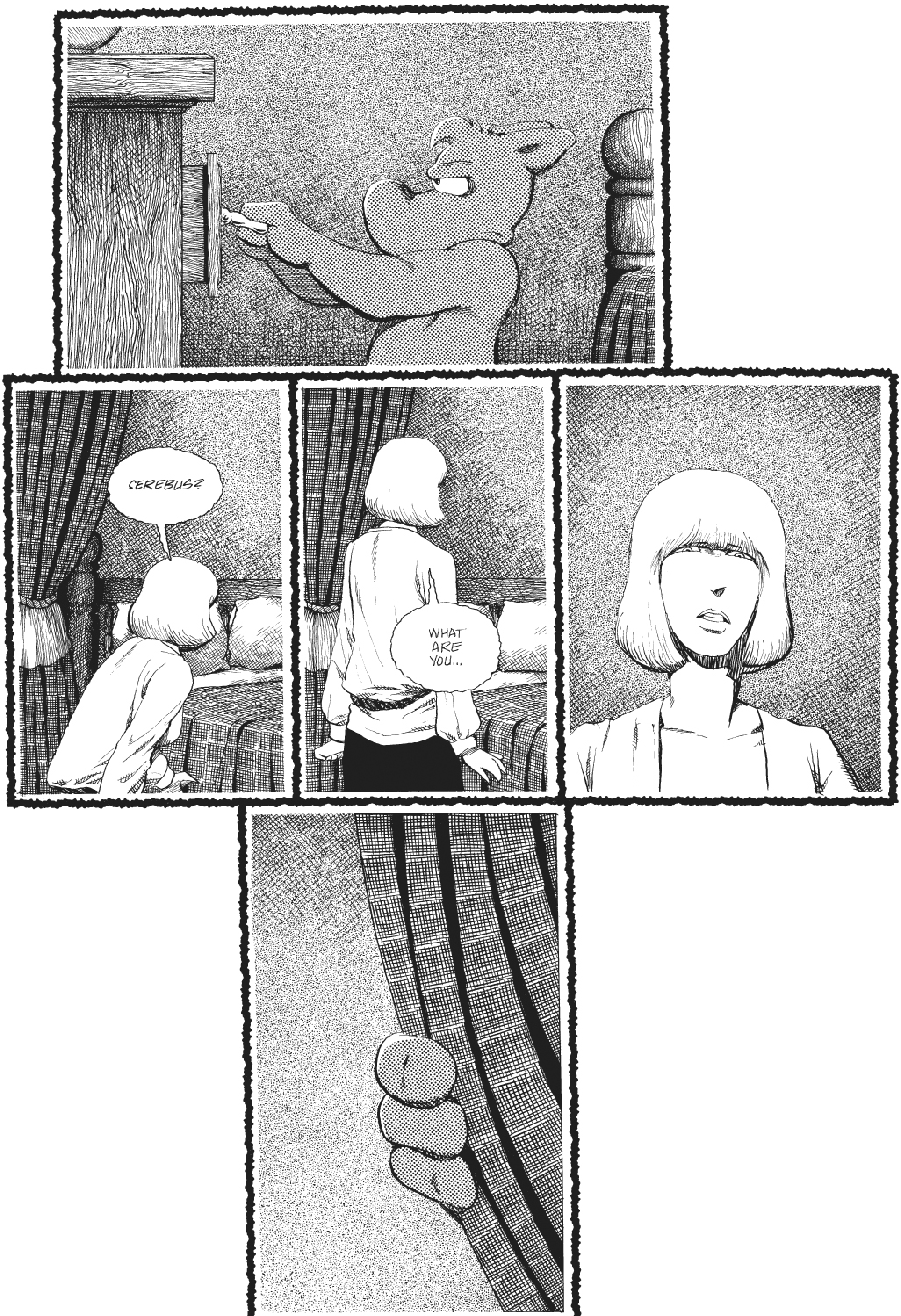


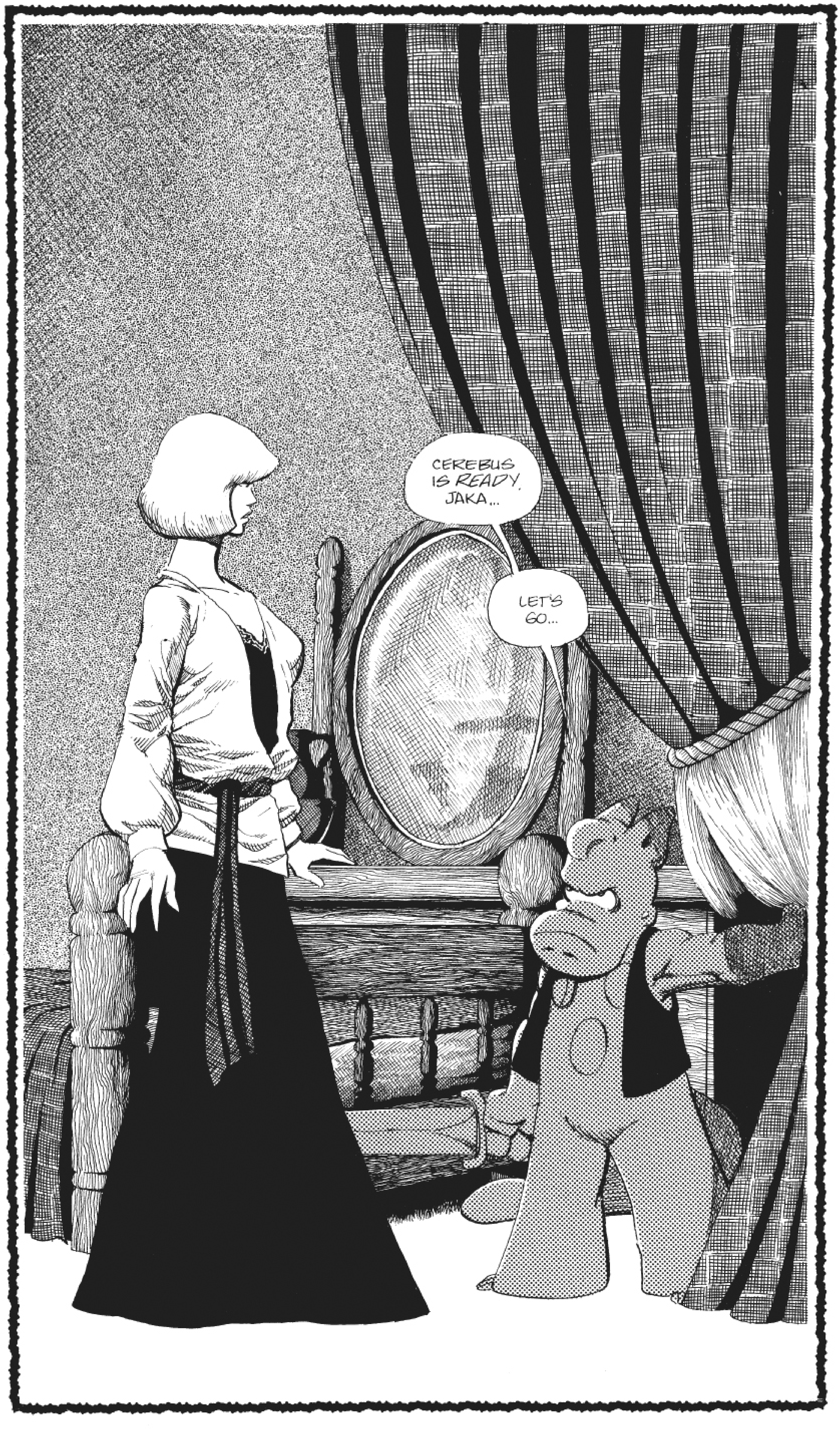

YOUR LIFE IS VERY *DIFFERENT* NOW...
YOUR POWER AND INFLUENCE IN THE *FELDWAR* VALLEY IS ALMOST *UNIMAGINABLE*...
THEY'RE CALLING YOU THE *SAVIOUR OF IEST*, YOU KNOW
THE WAY THEY CALLED MY *UNCLE* THE SAVIOUR OF PALNU...
I *LOVE* MY UNCLE
I ALWAYS *WILL*...


BUT I CAN'T ...
I WON'T
LIVE THAT WAY EVER AGAIN...
THE POWER CHANGED HIM. CHANGED SOMETHING VITAL INSIDE HIM.
AND IT WASN'T JUST UNCLE JULIUS
IT WAS EVERYONE AROUND HIM.
EVERYONE I KNEW WHEN I WAS A LITTLE GIRL

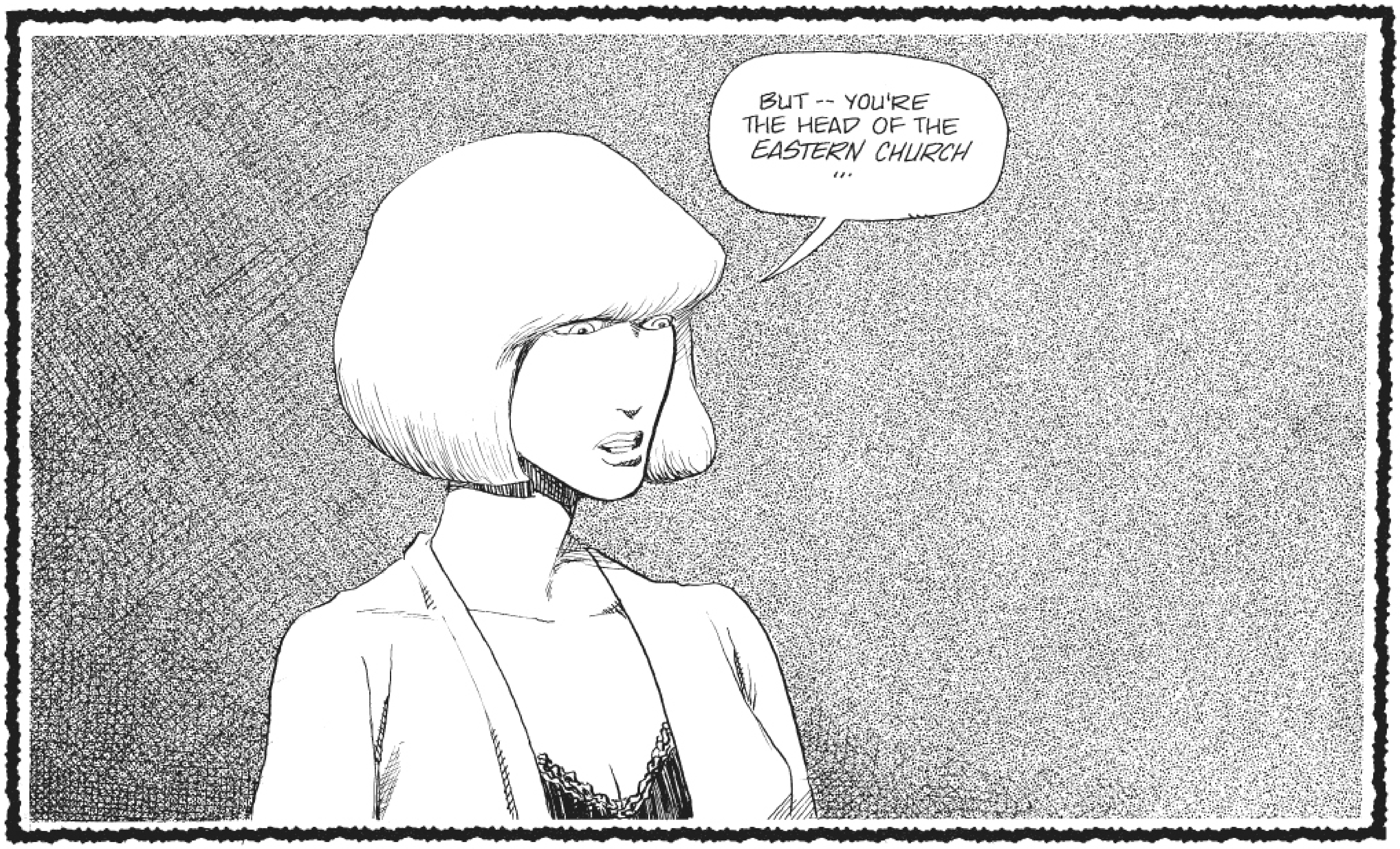

IT'S THE REASON I *LEFT*..... IT'S THE REASON I GO BACK TO VISIT SO *SELDOM*...
I DON'T *KNOW* THEM ANYMORE ...
AND THEY DON'T KNOW *ME*...
STOP!
OH PLEASE DON'T BE *HURT*-- I...
QUIET, JAKA-- CEREBUS HAS TO THINK...


WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

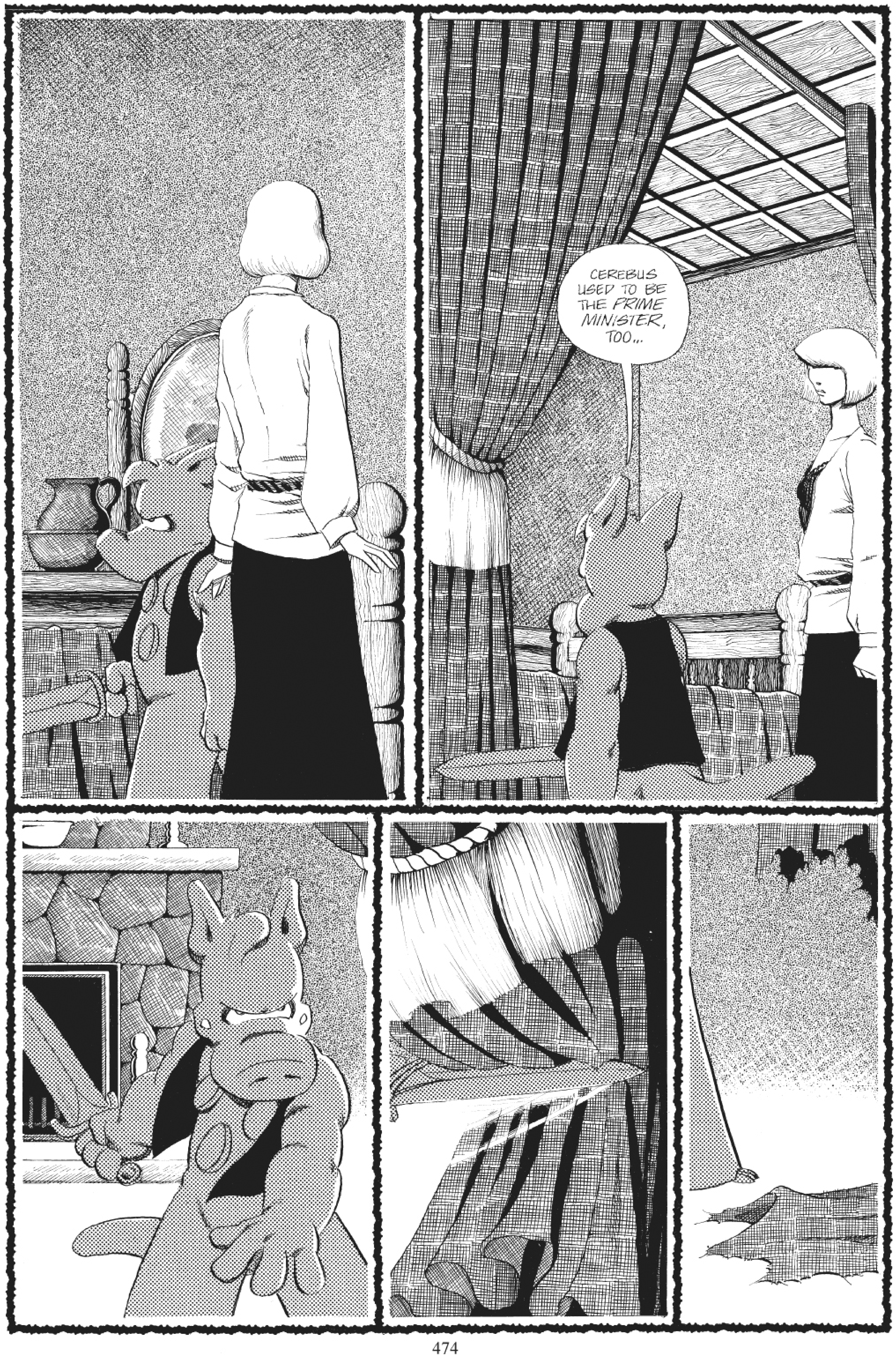

CEREBUS?
WHAT ARE YOU...

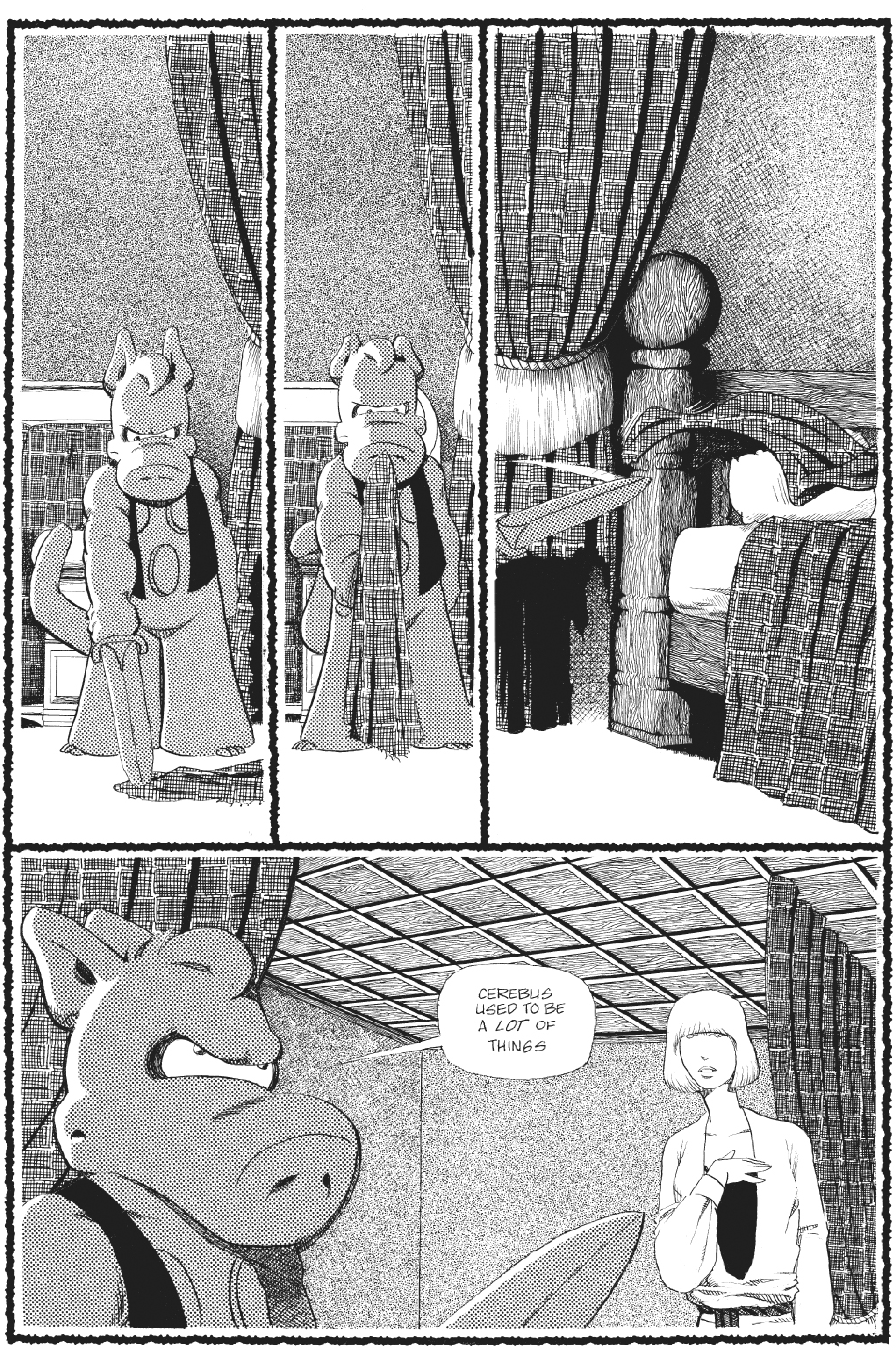

CEREBUS IS *READY*, JAKA...
LET'S GO...

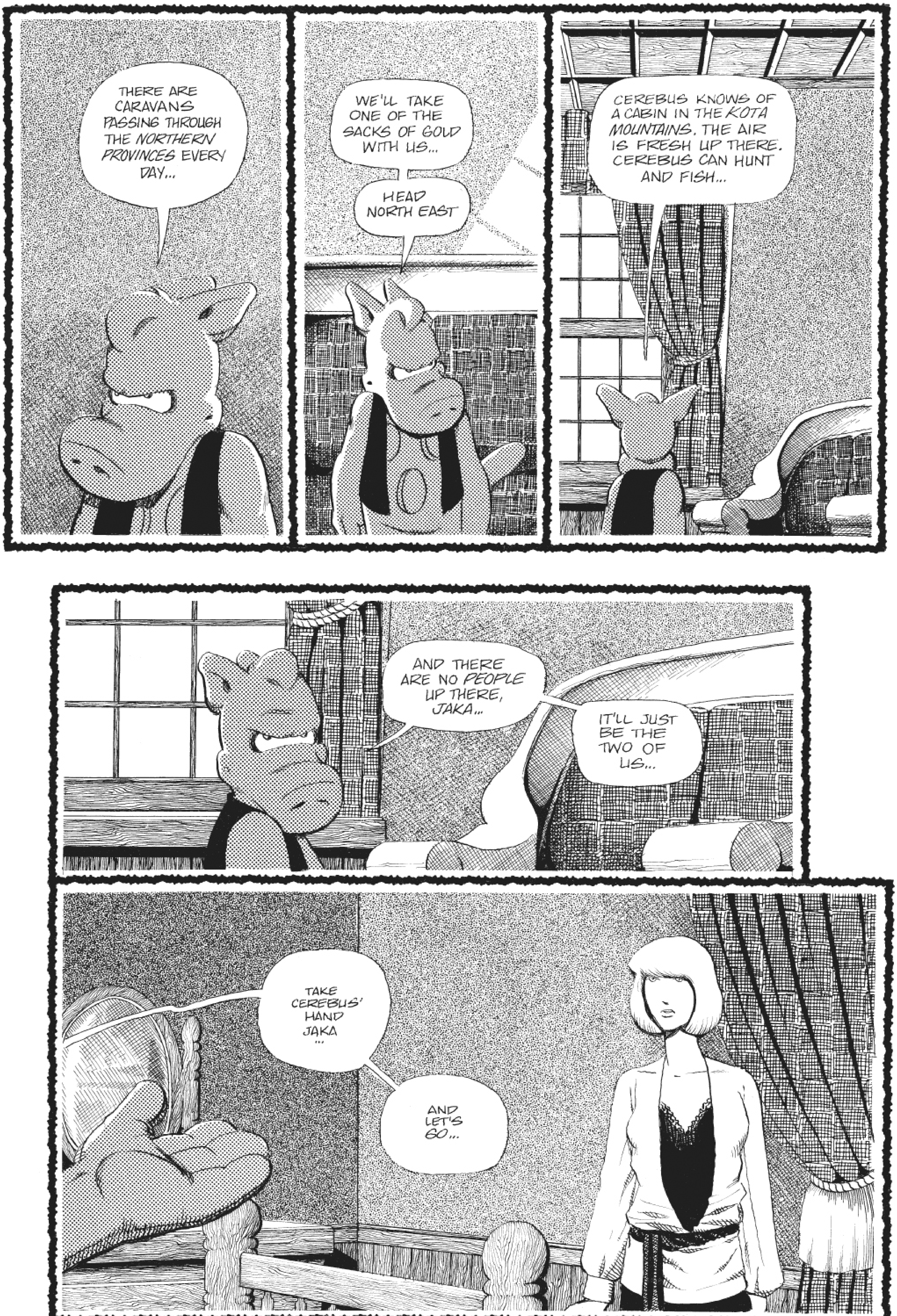
TERRIBLE

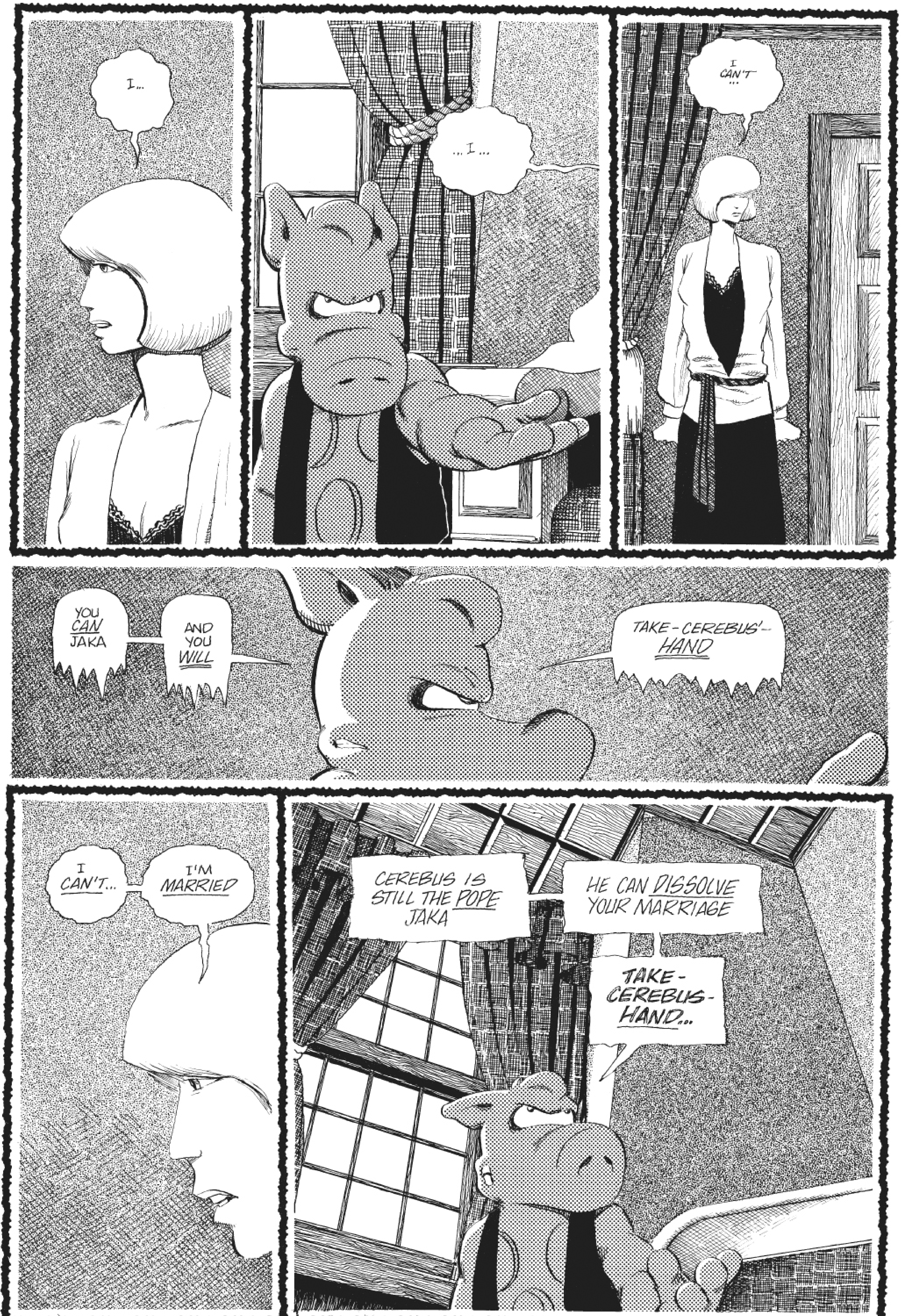

BUT -- YOU'RE THE HEAD OF THE *EASTERN CHURCH* ...

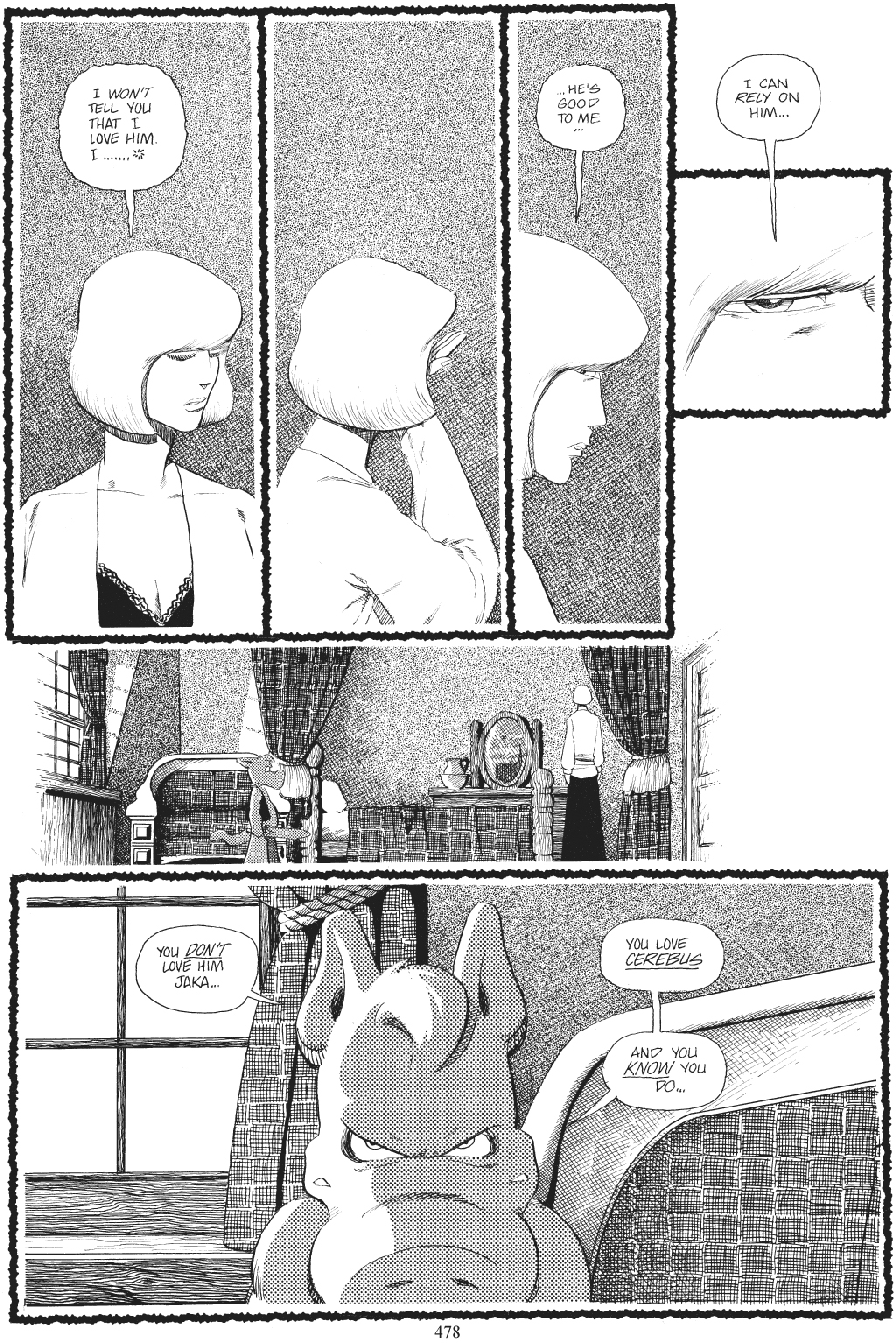
ANALOGIES

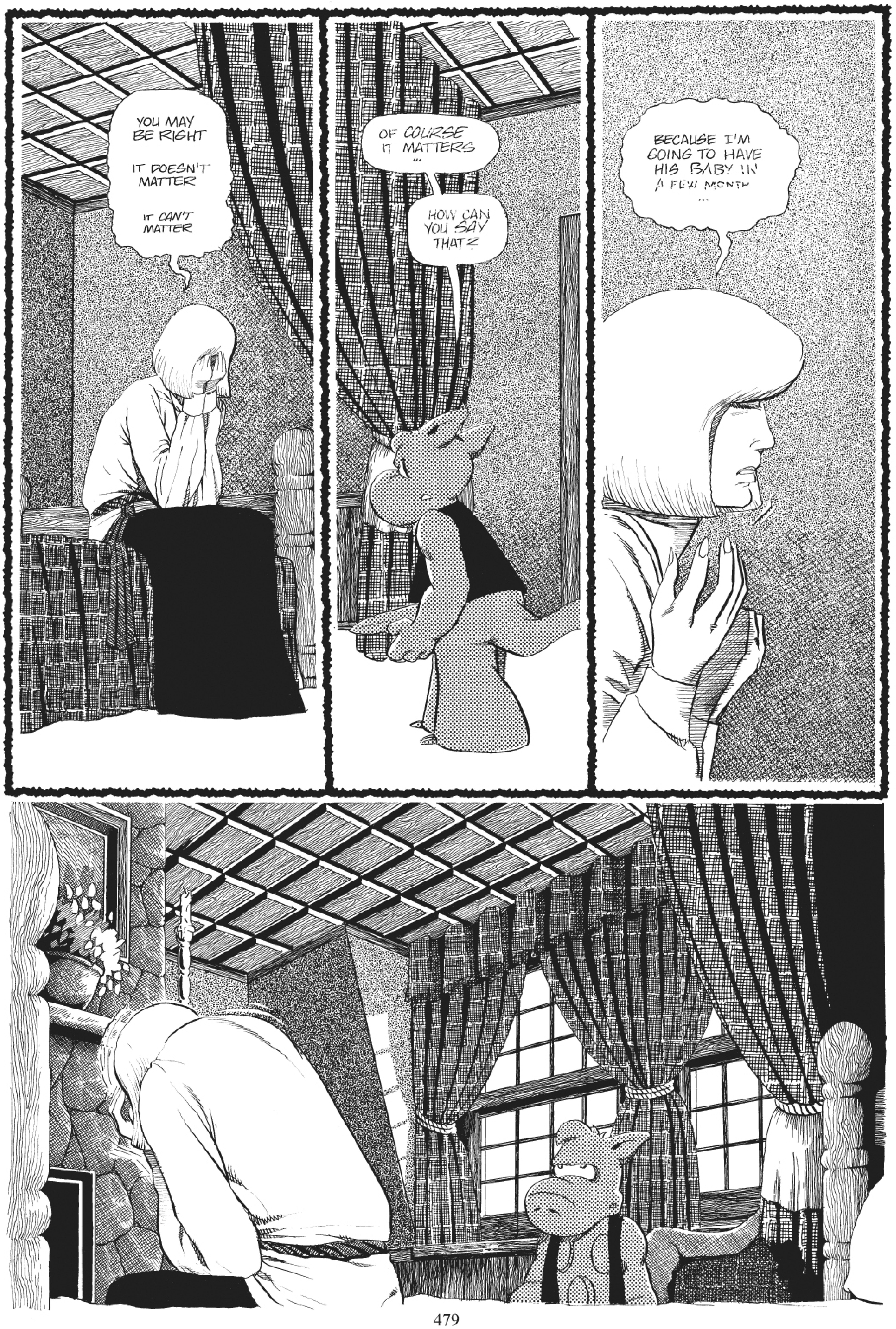

CEREBUS USED TO BE THE PRIME MINISTER, TOO...

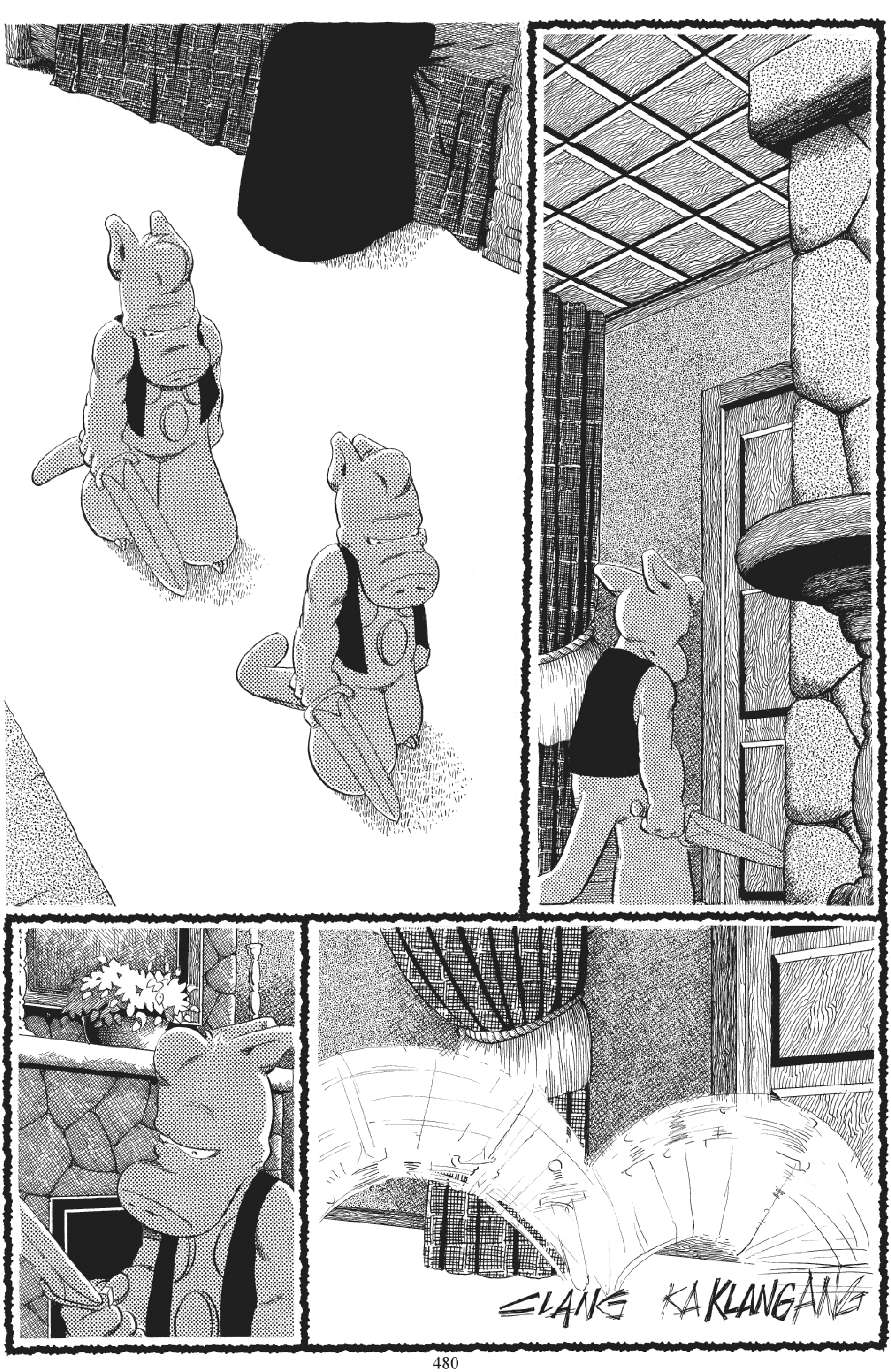

CEREBUS USED TO BE A *LOT* OF THINGS

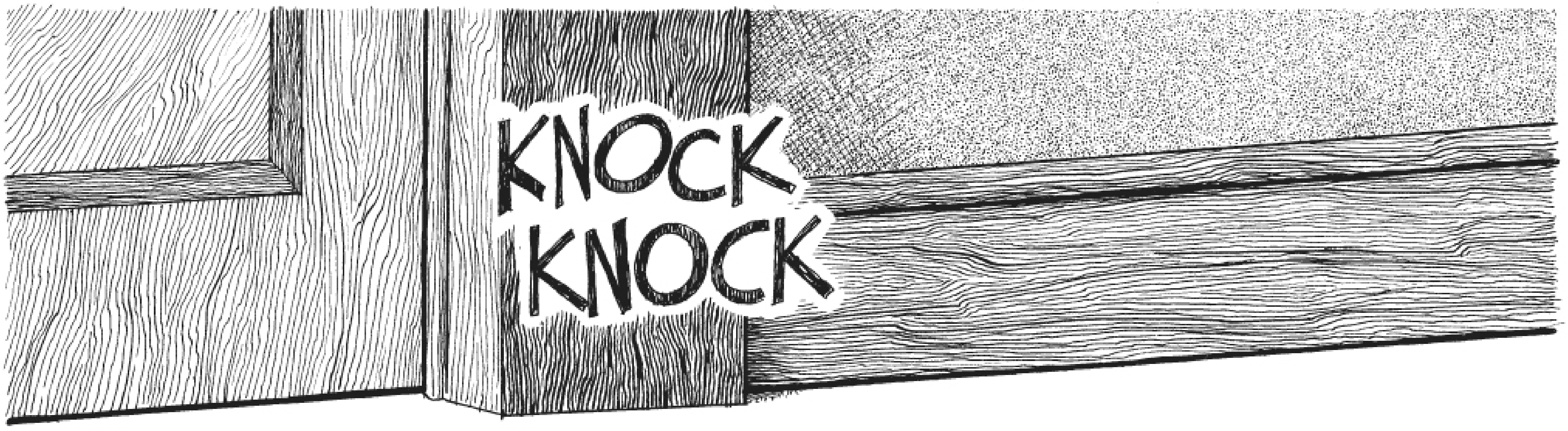

THERE ARE CARAVANS PASSING THROUGH THE *NORTHERN PROVINCES* EVERY DAY...
WE'LL TAKE ONE OF THE SACKS OF GOLD WITH US...
HEAD NORTH EAST
CEREBUS KNOWS OF A CABIN IN THE *KOTA MOUNTAINS*. THE AIR IS FRESH UP THERE. CEREBUS CAN HUNT AND FISH...
AND THERE ARE NO *PEOPLE* UP THERE, JAKA...
IT'LL JUST BE THE TWO OF US...
TAKE CEREBUS' HAND JAKA ...
AND LET'S *GO*...

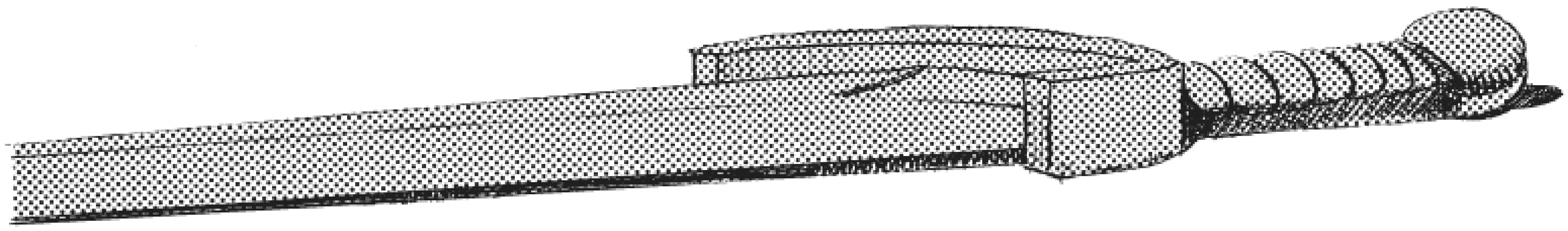

I...
...I...
I CAN'T ...
YOU CAN JAKA
AND YOU WILL
TAKE-CEREBUS'-HAND
I CAN'T...
I'M MARRIED
CEREBUS IS STILL THE POPE JAKA
HE CAN DISSOLVE YOUR MARRIAGE
TAKE-CEREBUS-HAND...

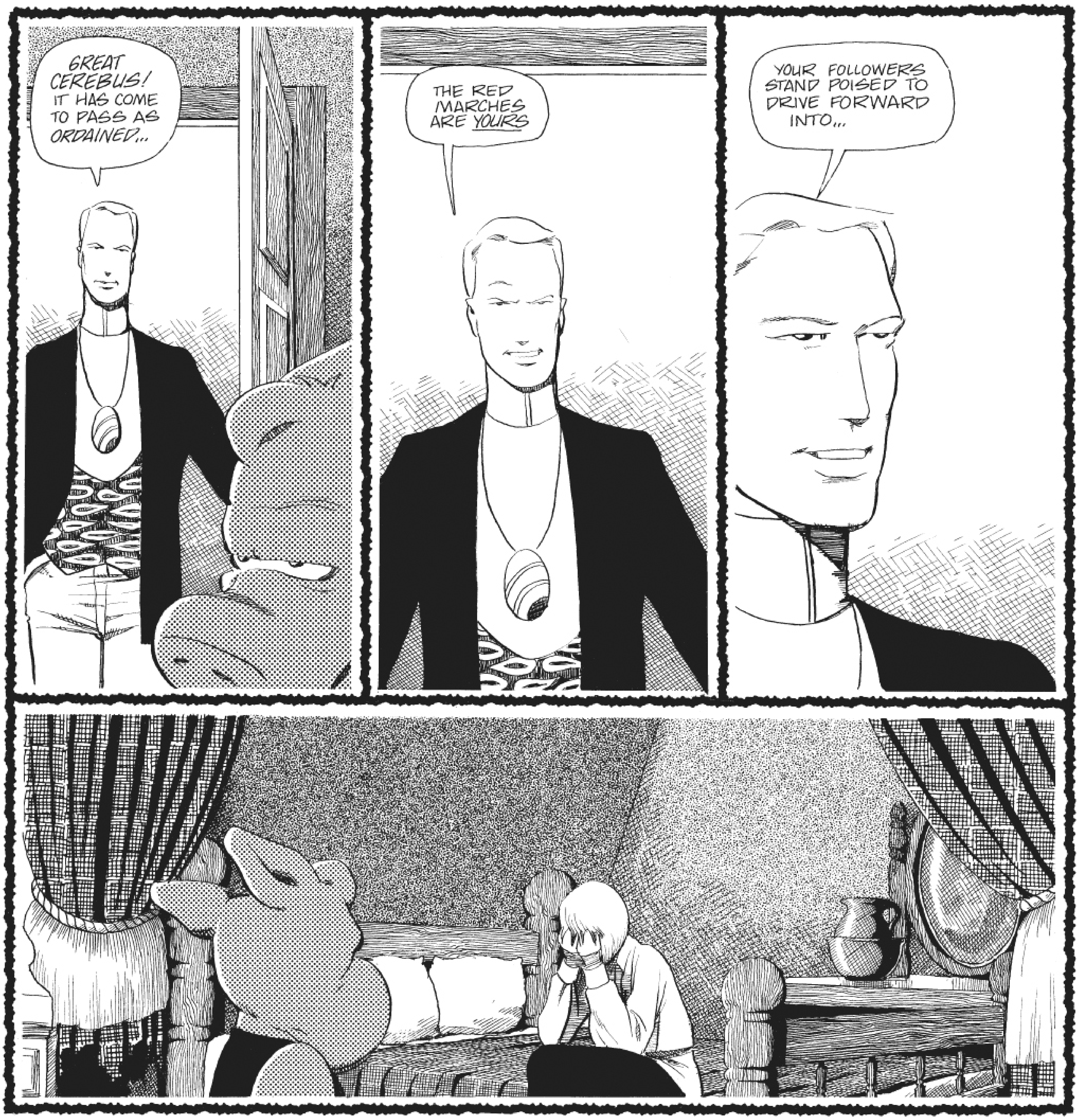

I *WON'T* TELL YOU THAT I LOVE HIM. I ......,
...HE'S GOOD TO ME ...
I CAN *RELY* ON HIM...
YOU *DON'T* LOVE HIM JAKA...
YOU LOVE *CEREBUS*
AND YOU *KNOW* YOU DO...

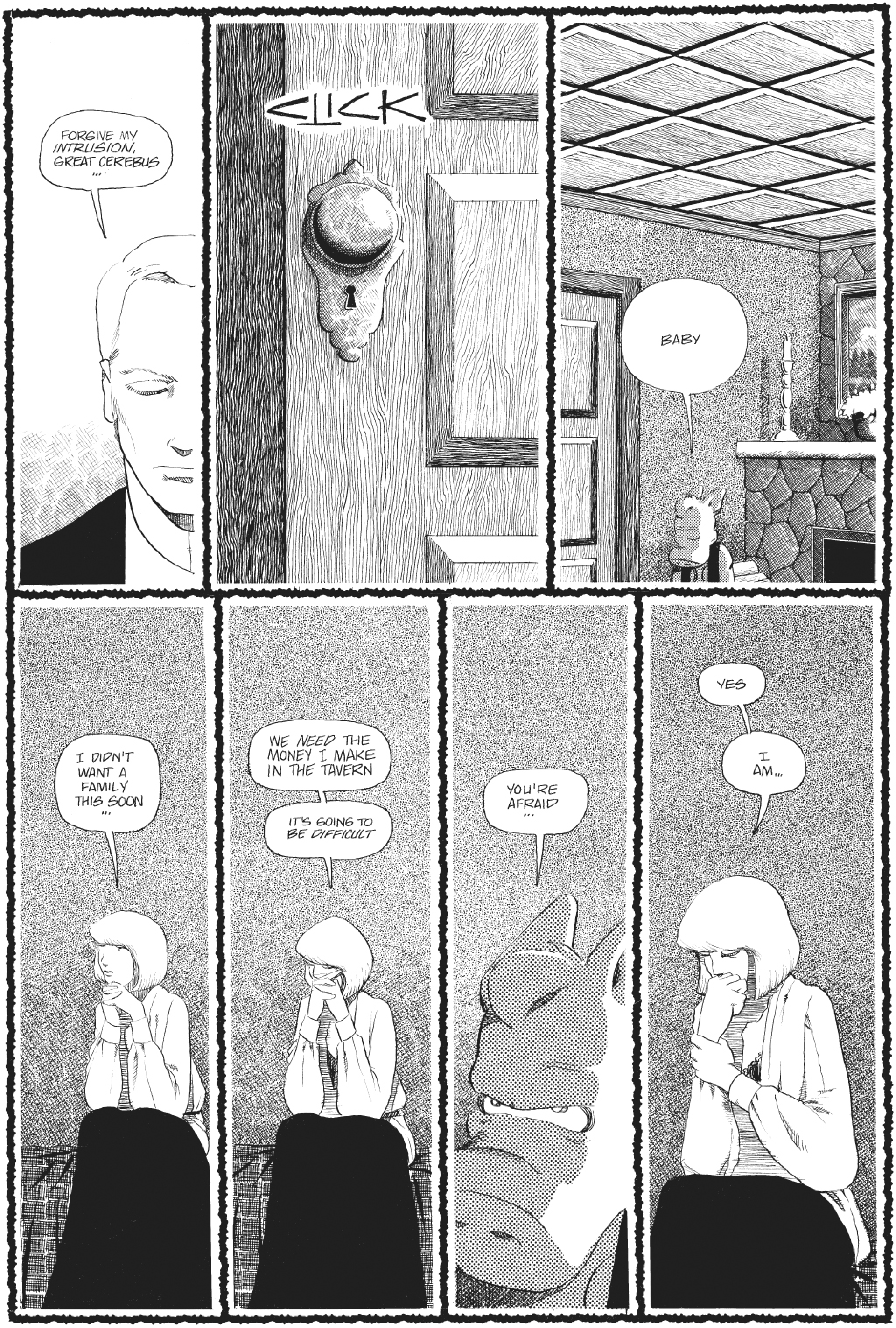

YOU MAY BE RIGHT
IT DOESN'T MATTER
IT *CAN'T* MATTER
OF *COURSE* IT MATTERS ...
HOW CAN YOU *SAY* THAT?
BECAUSE I'M GOING TO HAVE HIS BABY IN A FEW MONTH ...

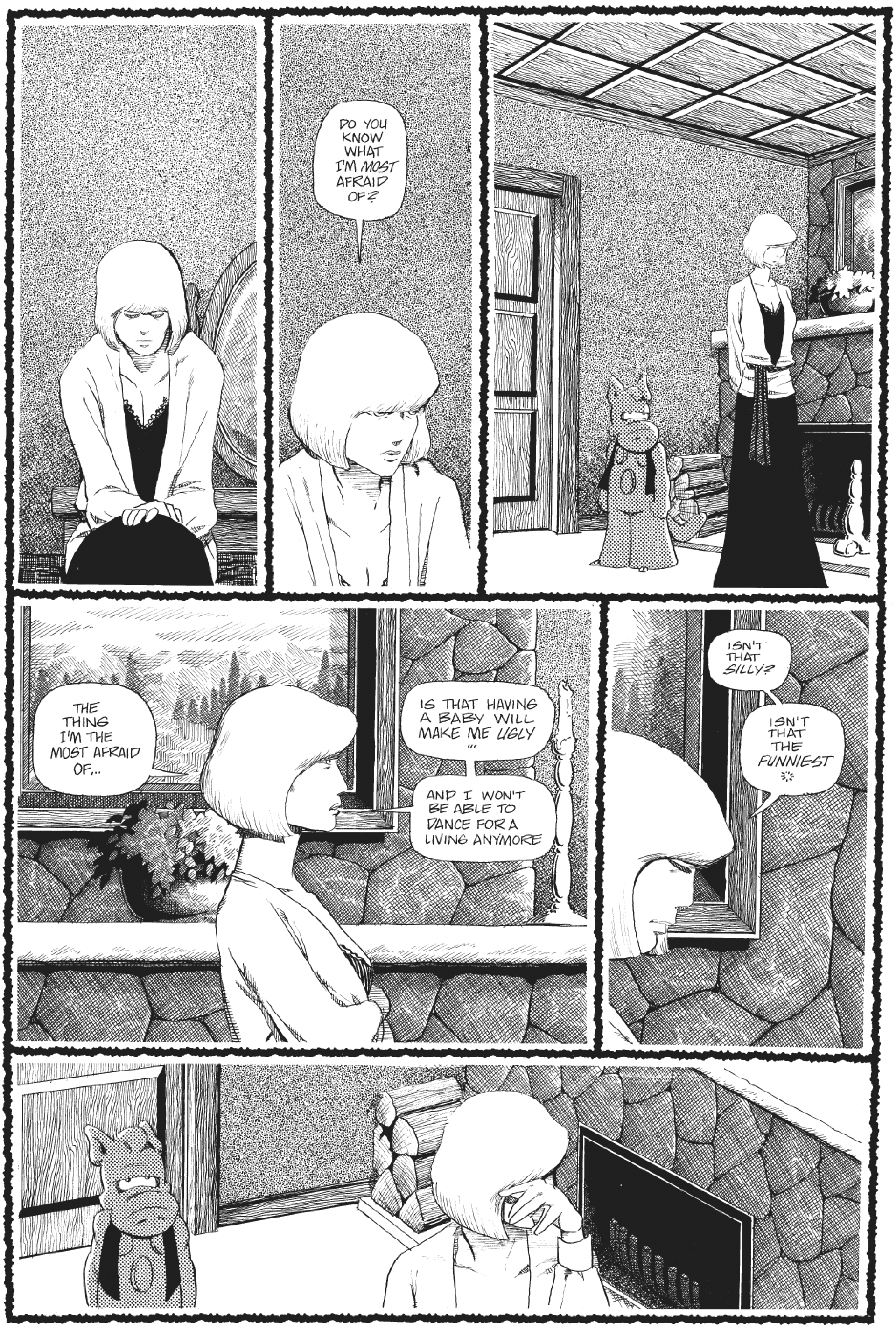

CLANG KAKLANGANG

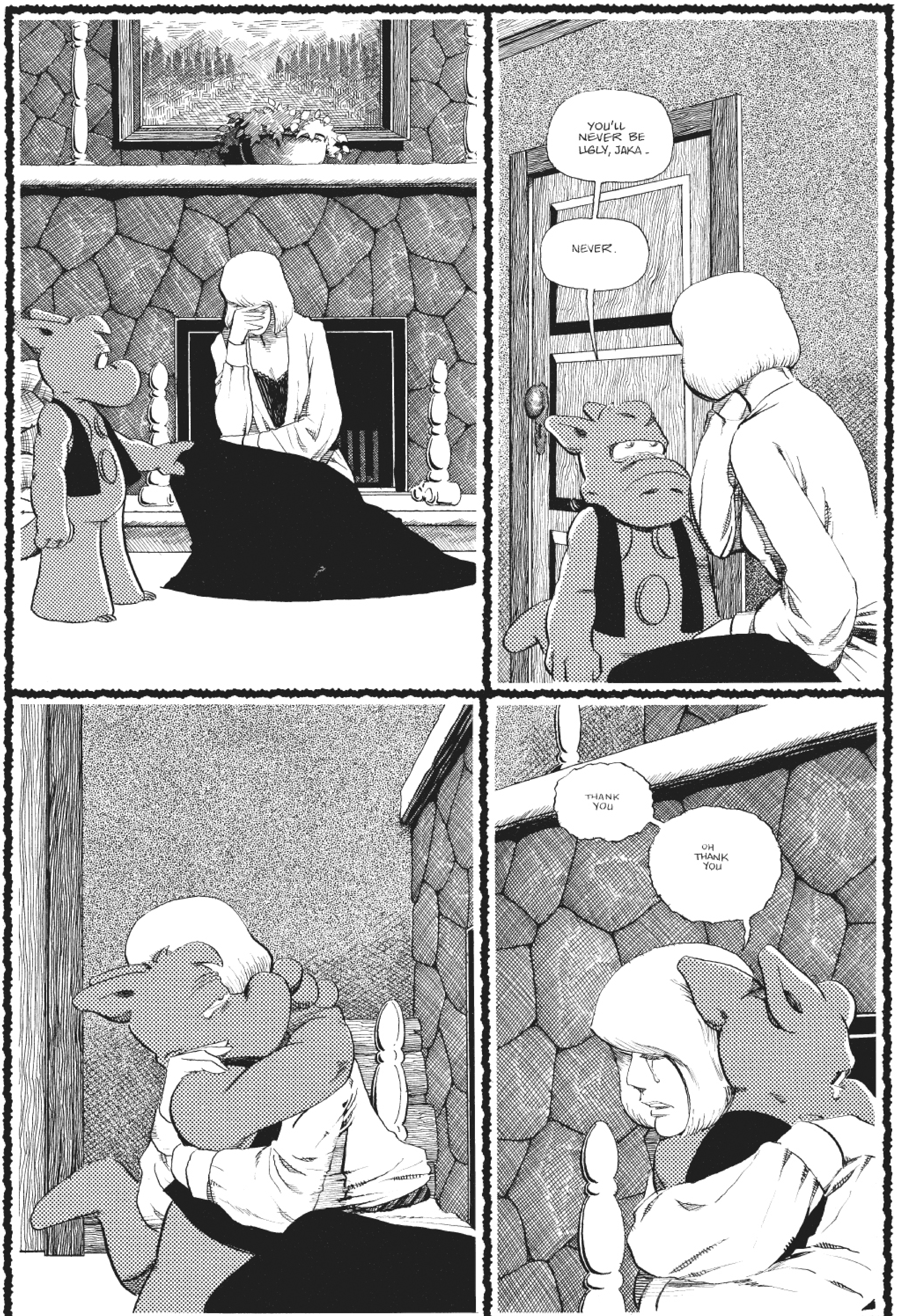

KNOCK
KNOCK

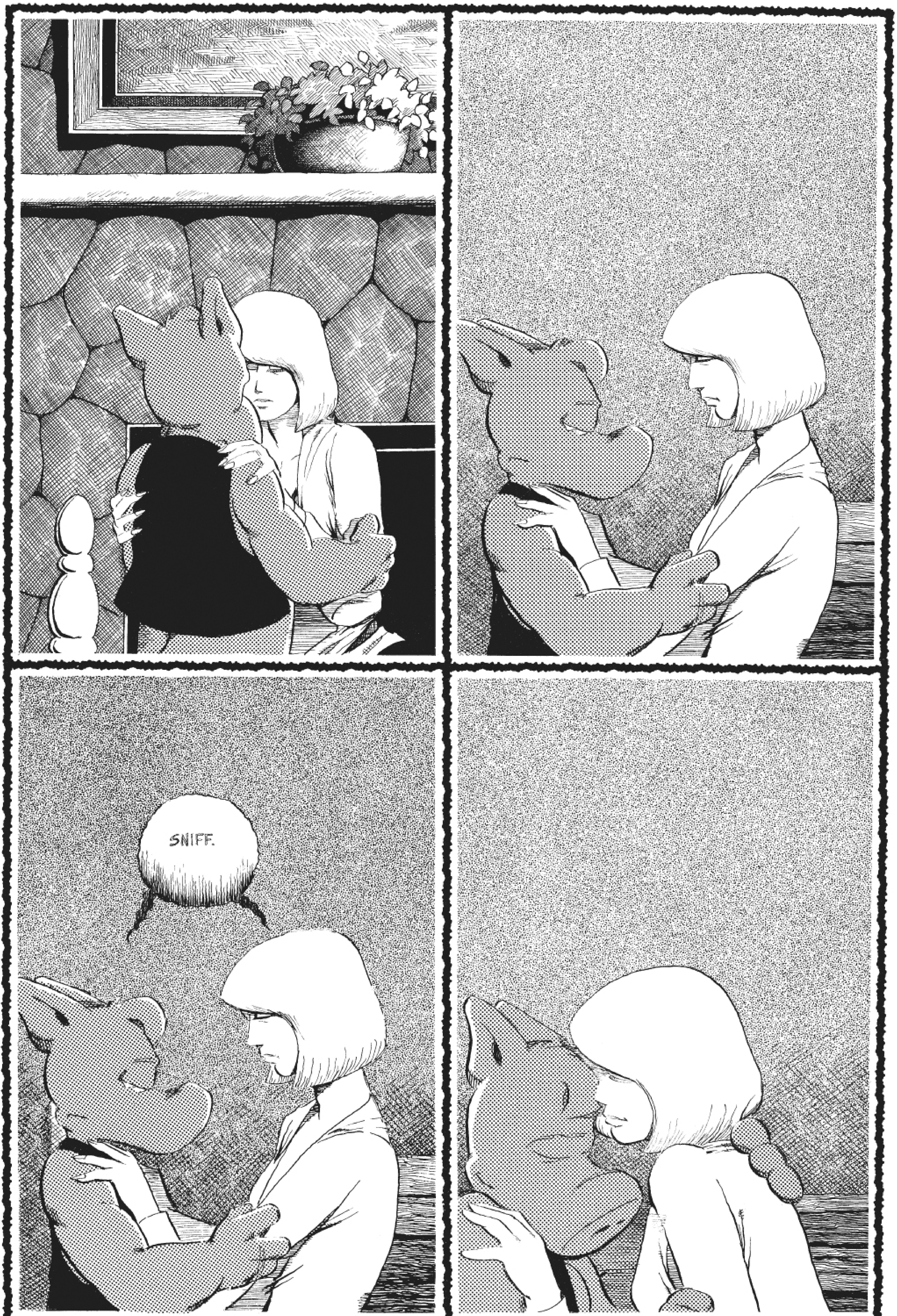


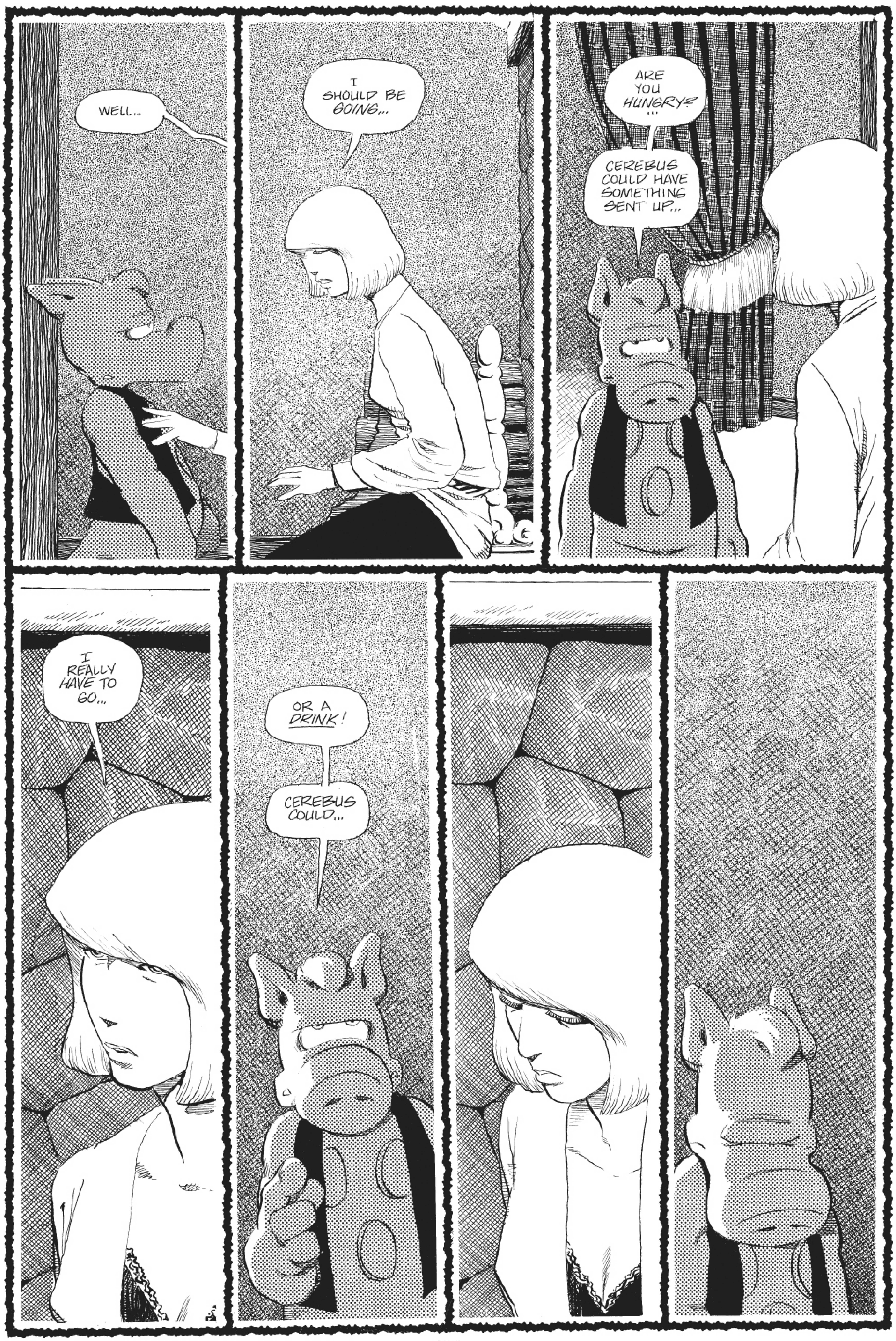

GREAT CEREBUS! IT HAS COME TO PASS AS ORDAINED...
THE RED MARCHES ARE YOURS
YOUR FOLLOWERS STAND POISED TO DRIVE FORWARD INTO...

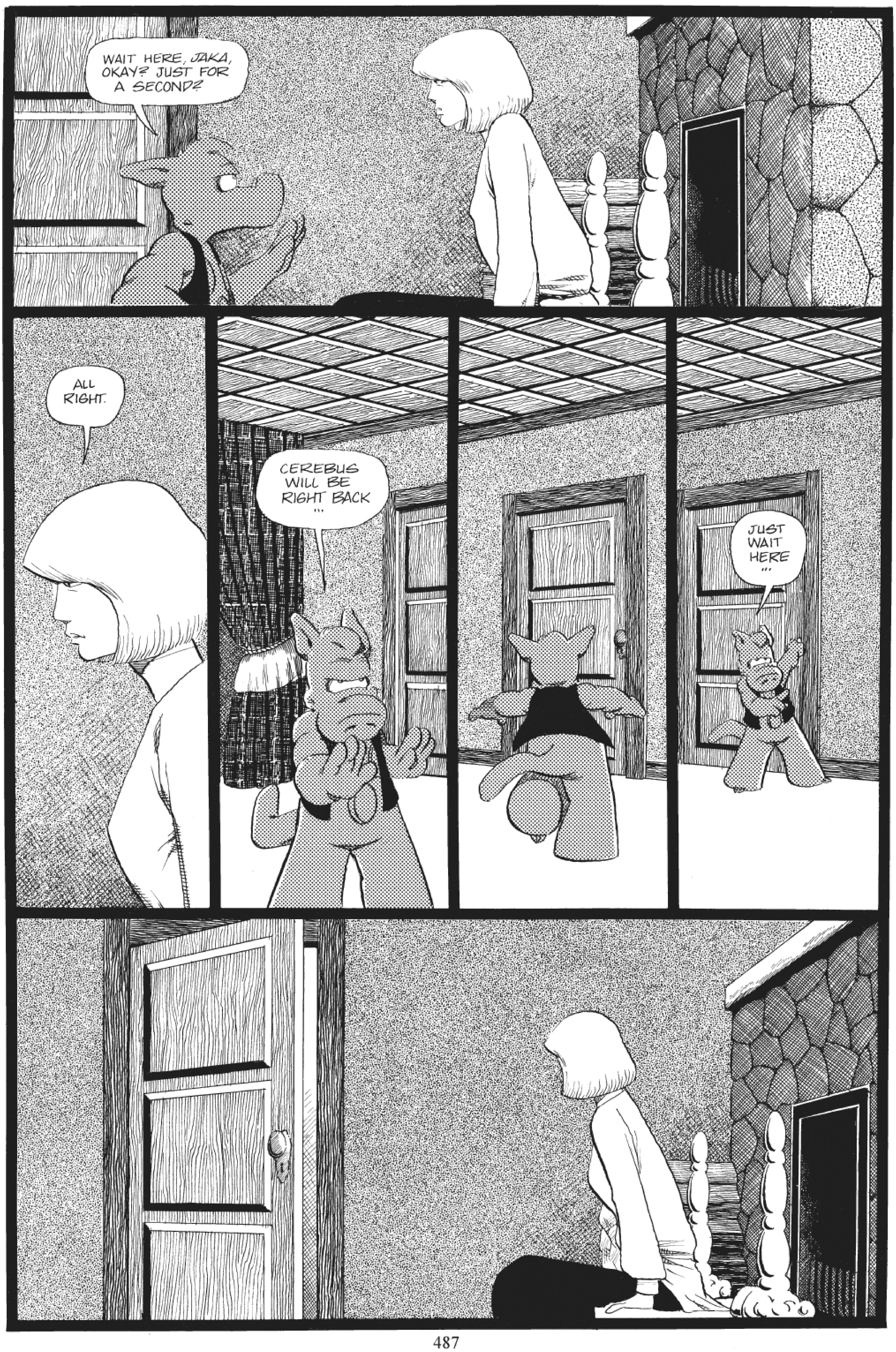

FORGIVE MY *INTRUSION,* GREAT CEREBUS ...
CLICK
BABY
I DIDN'T WANT A FAMILY THIS SOON ...
WE *NEED* THE MONEY I MAKE IN THE TAVERN
IT'S GOING TO BE *DIFFICULT*
YOU'RE AFRAID ...
YES
I AM...

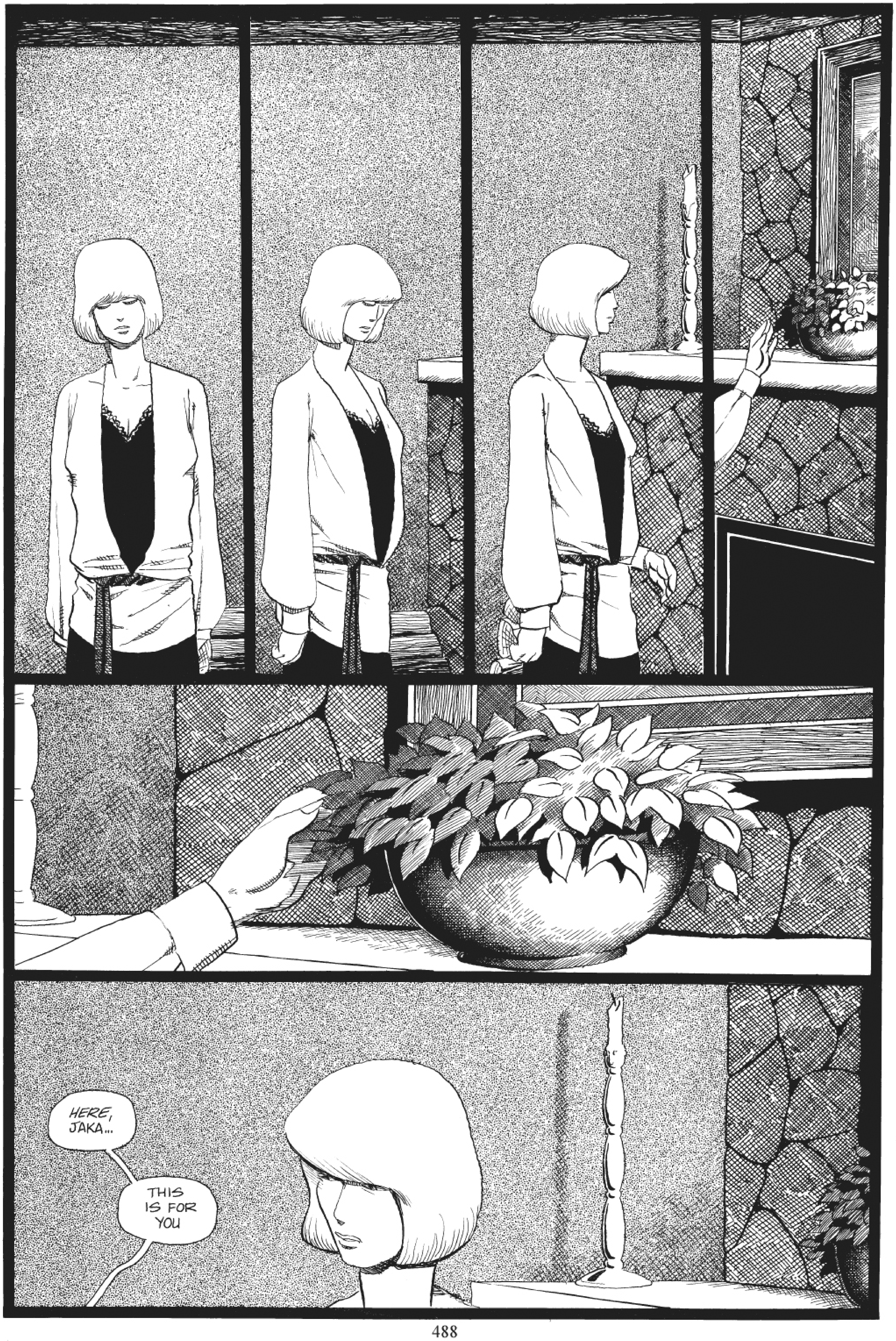

DO YOU KNOW WHAT I'M *MOST* AFRAID OF?
THE THING I'M THE MOST AFRAID OF...
IS THAT HAVING A BABY WILL MAKE ME *UGLY* ...
AND I WON'T BE ABLE TO DANCE FOR A LIVING ANYMORE
ISN'T THAT *SILLY*?
ISN'T THAT THE *FUNNIEST*

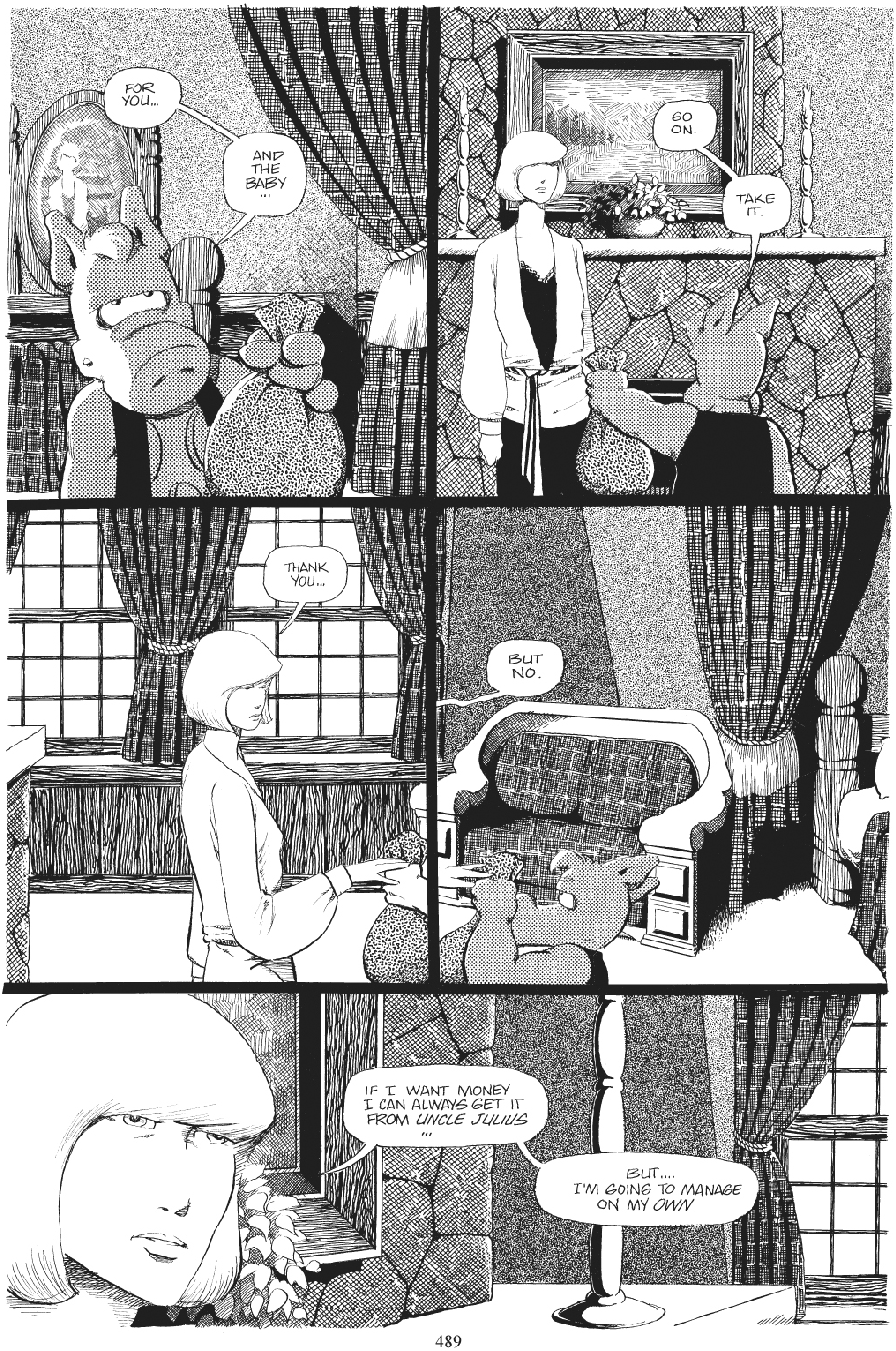

YOU'LL NEVER BE UGLY, JAKA.
NEVER.
THANK YOU
OH THANK YOU

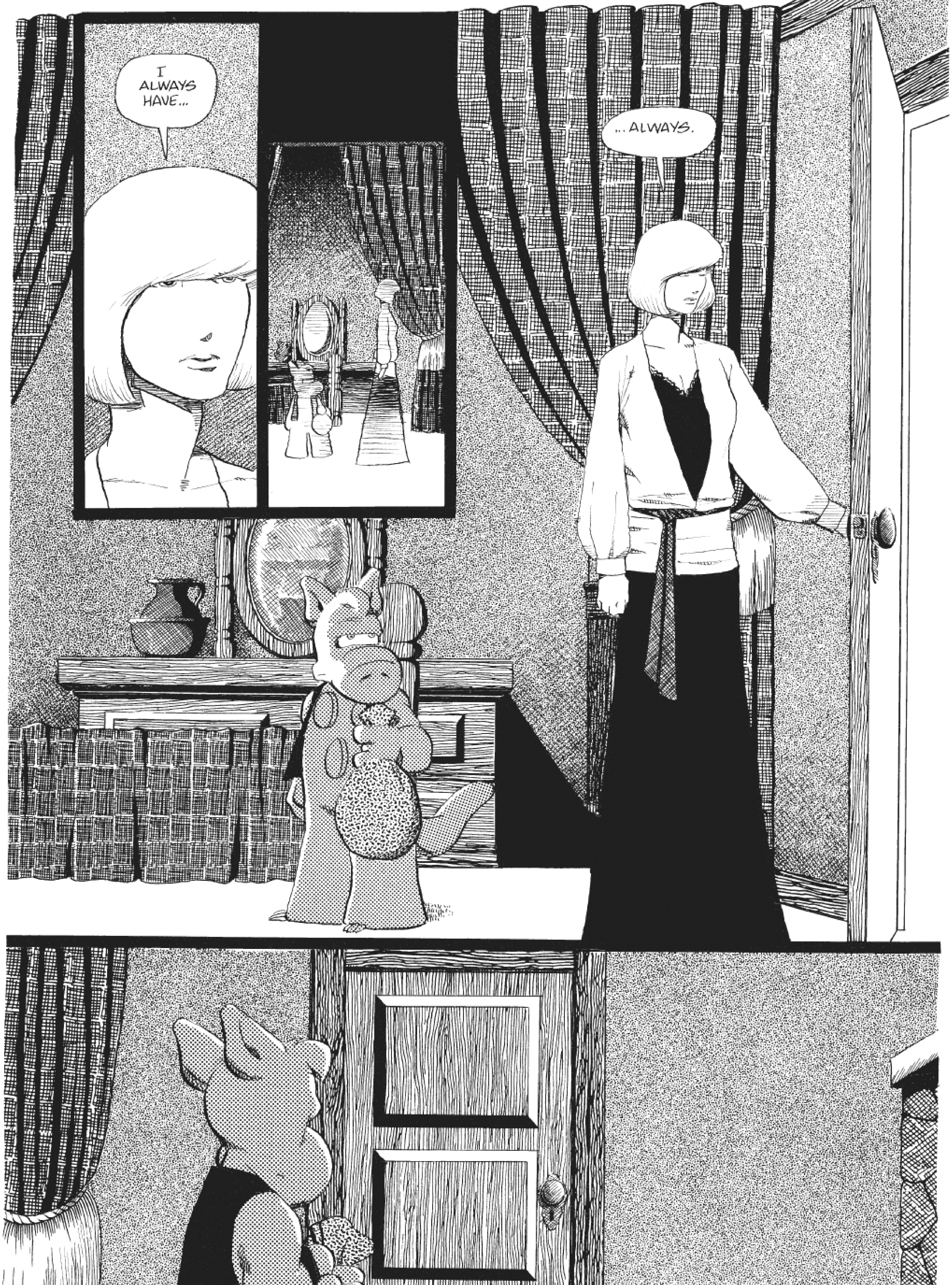

SNIFF.

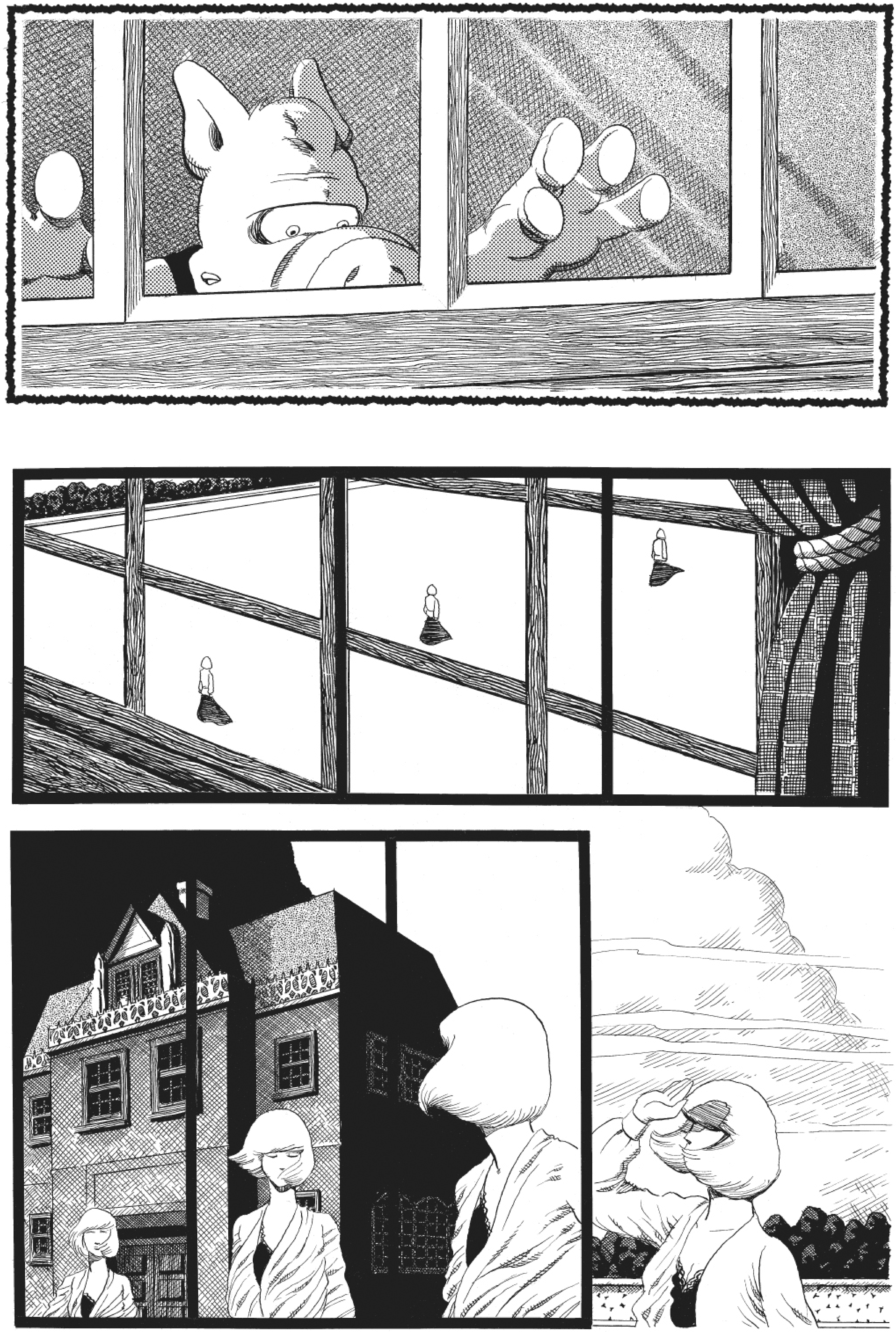

WELL...
I SHOULD BE *GOING*...
ARE YOU *HUNGRY?*...
CEREBUS COULD HAVE SOMETHING SENT UP...
I REALLY *HAVE* TO GO...
OR A *DRINK*!
CEREBUS COULD...

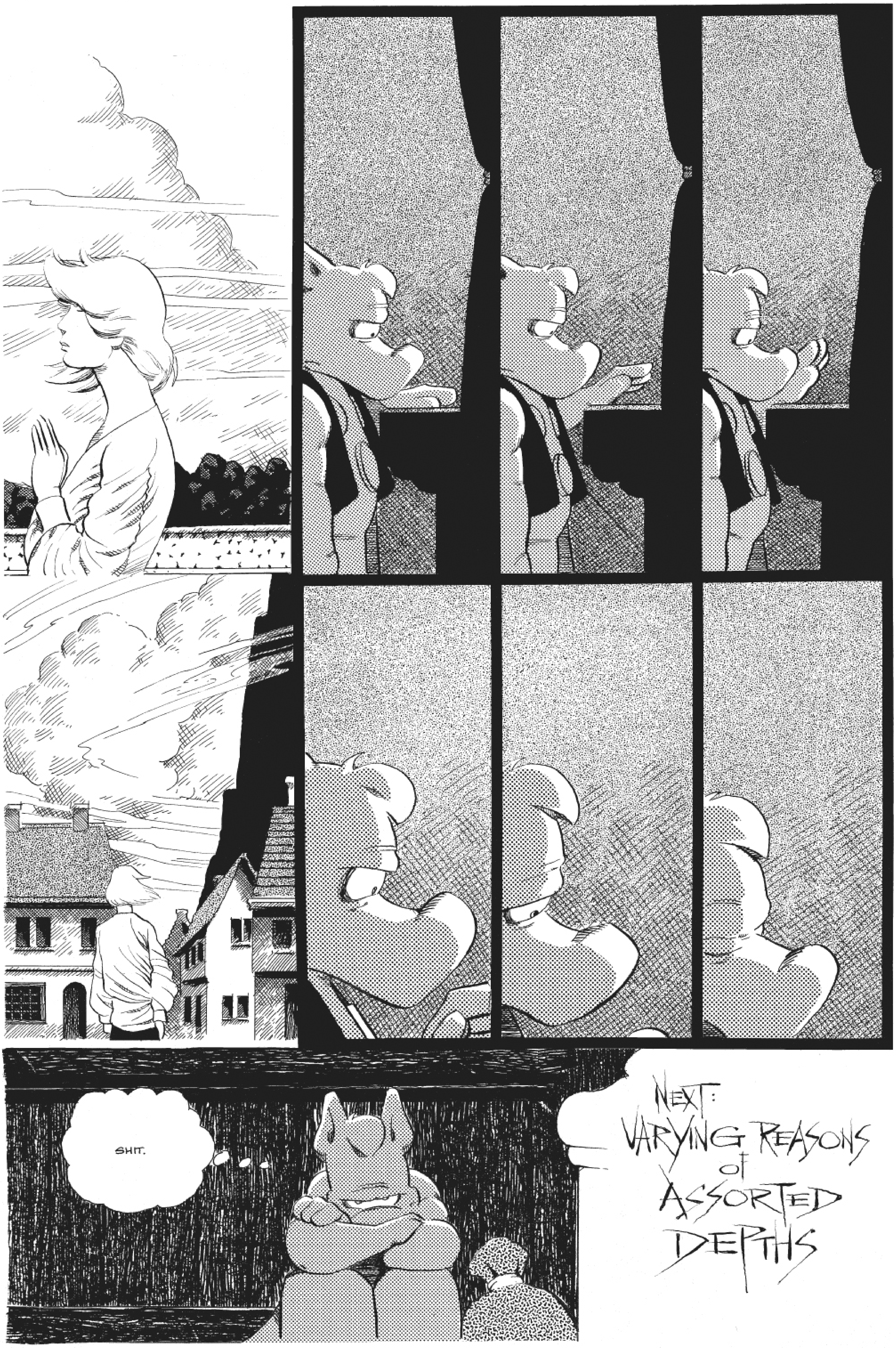

WAIT HERE, JAKA, OKAY? JUST FOR A SECOND?
ALL RIGHT.
CEREBUS WILL BE RIGHT BACK ...
JUST WAIT HERE ...

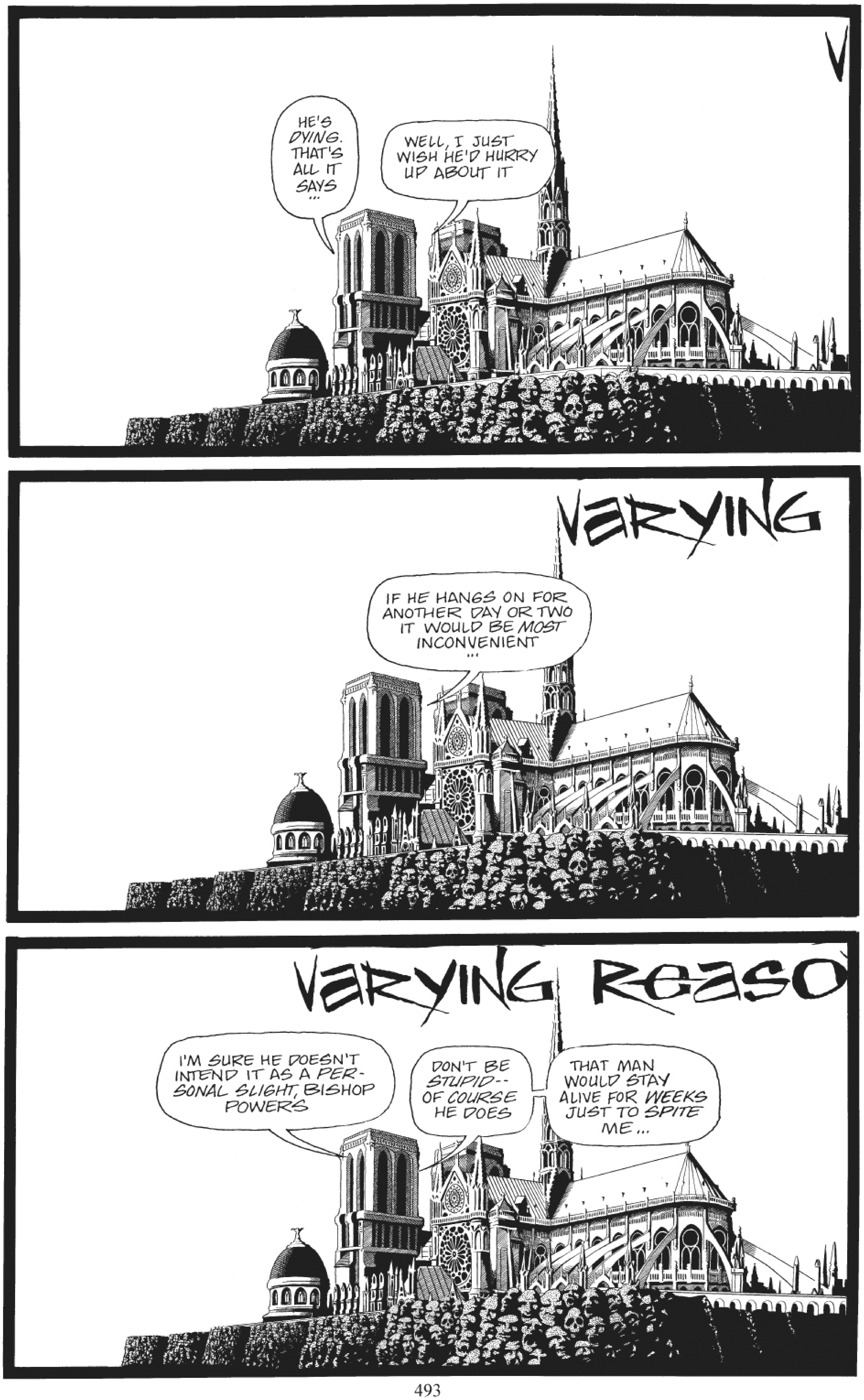

HERE, JAKA...
THIS IS FOR YOU

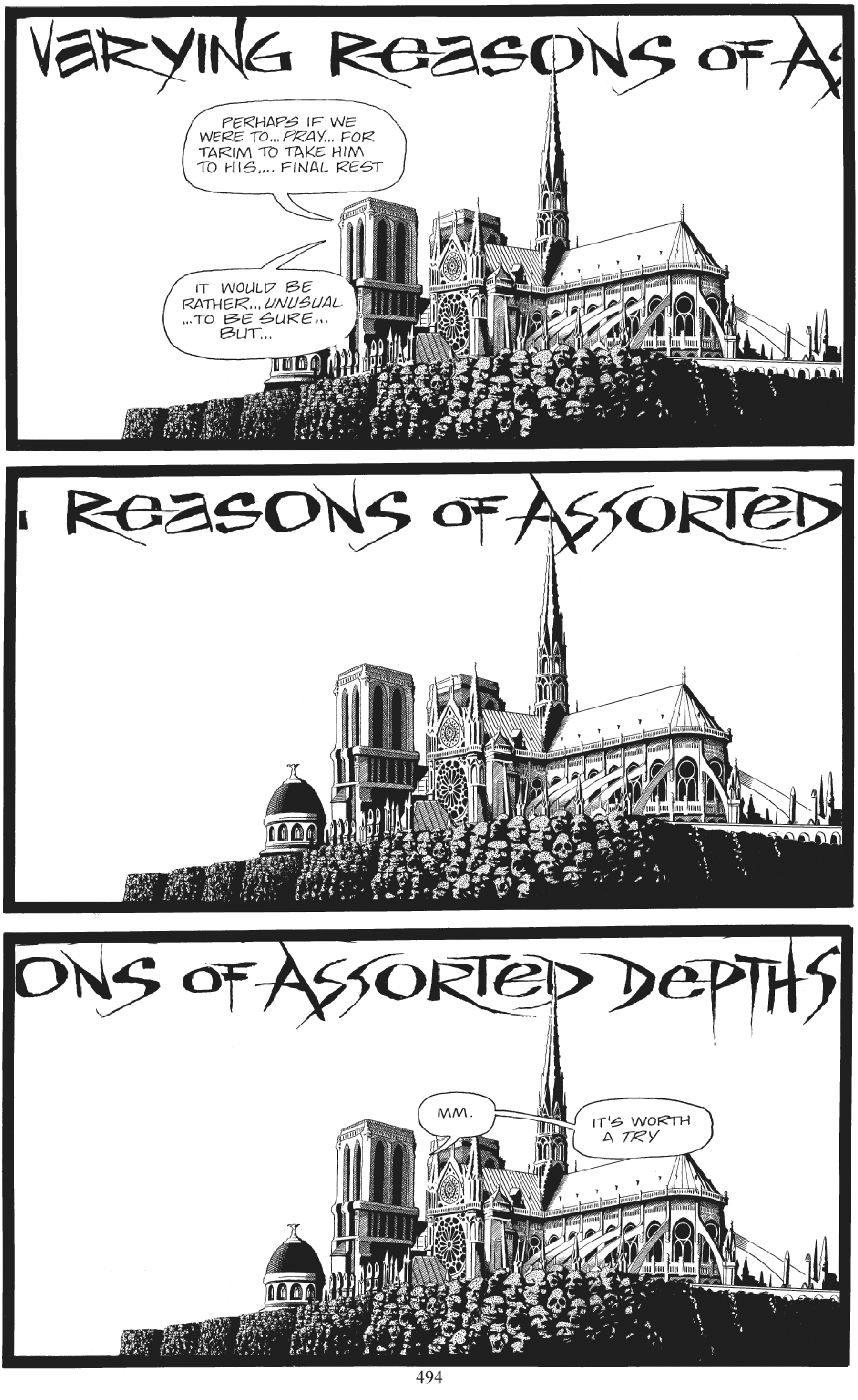

FOR YOU...
AND THE BABY ...
GO ON.
TAKE IT.
THANK YOU...
BUT NO.
IF I WANT MONEY I CAN ALWAYS GET IT FROM *UNCLE JULIUS* ...
BUT.... I'M GOING TO MANAGE ON MY *OWN*

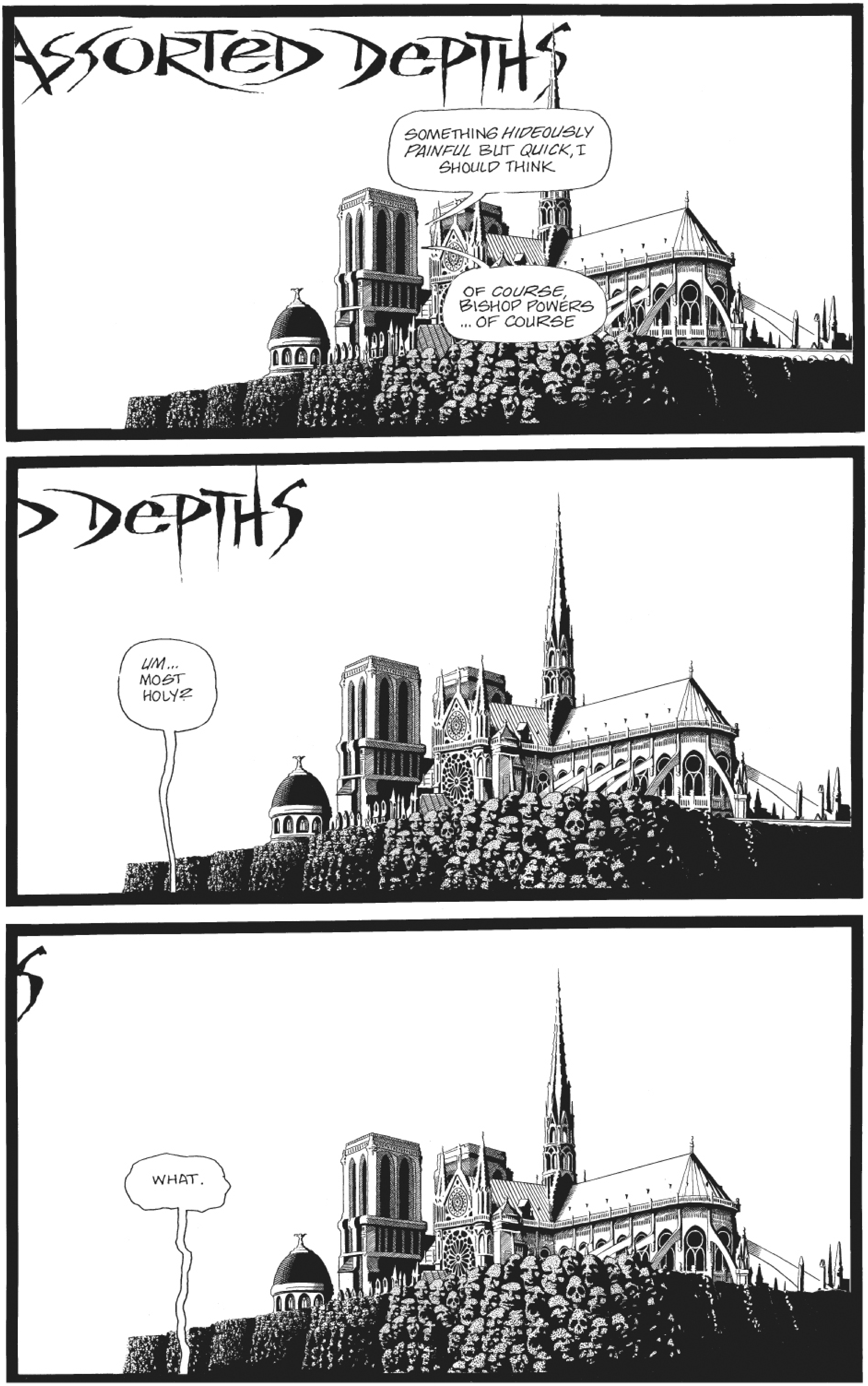

I ALWAYS HAVE...
...ALWAYS.

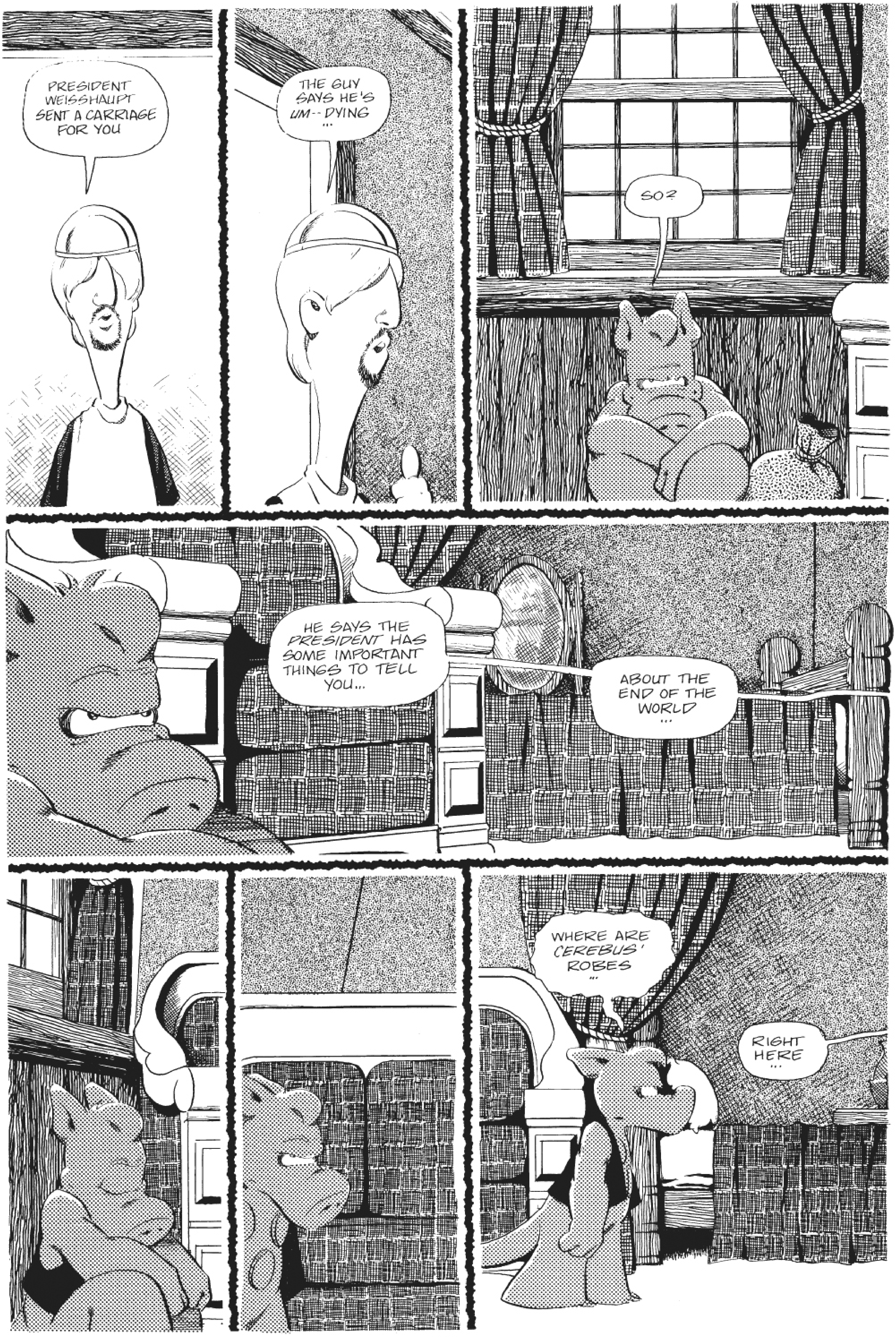


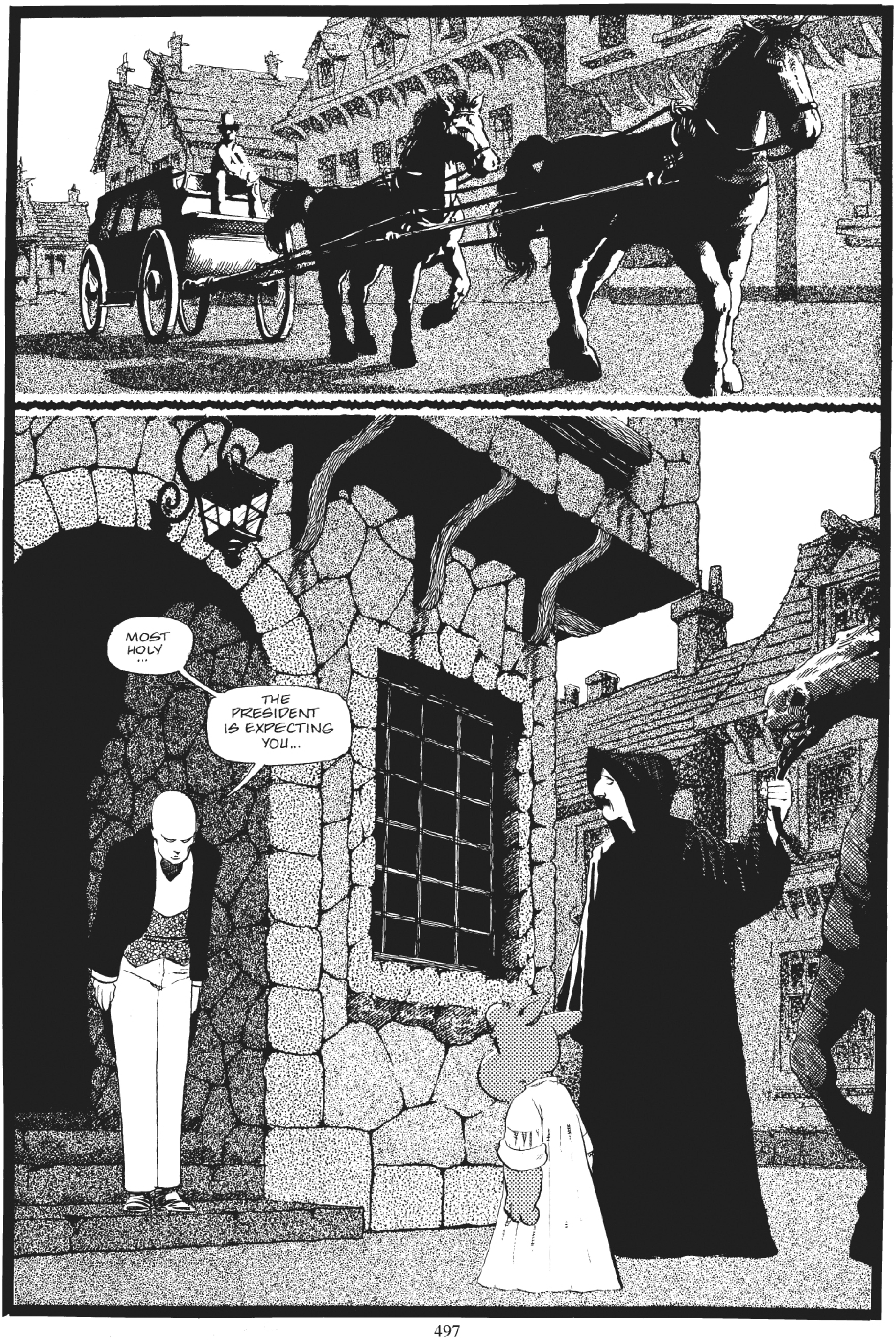

SHIT.
NEXT: VARYING REASONS of ASSORTED DEPTHS

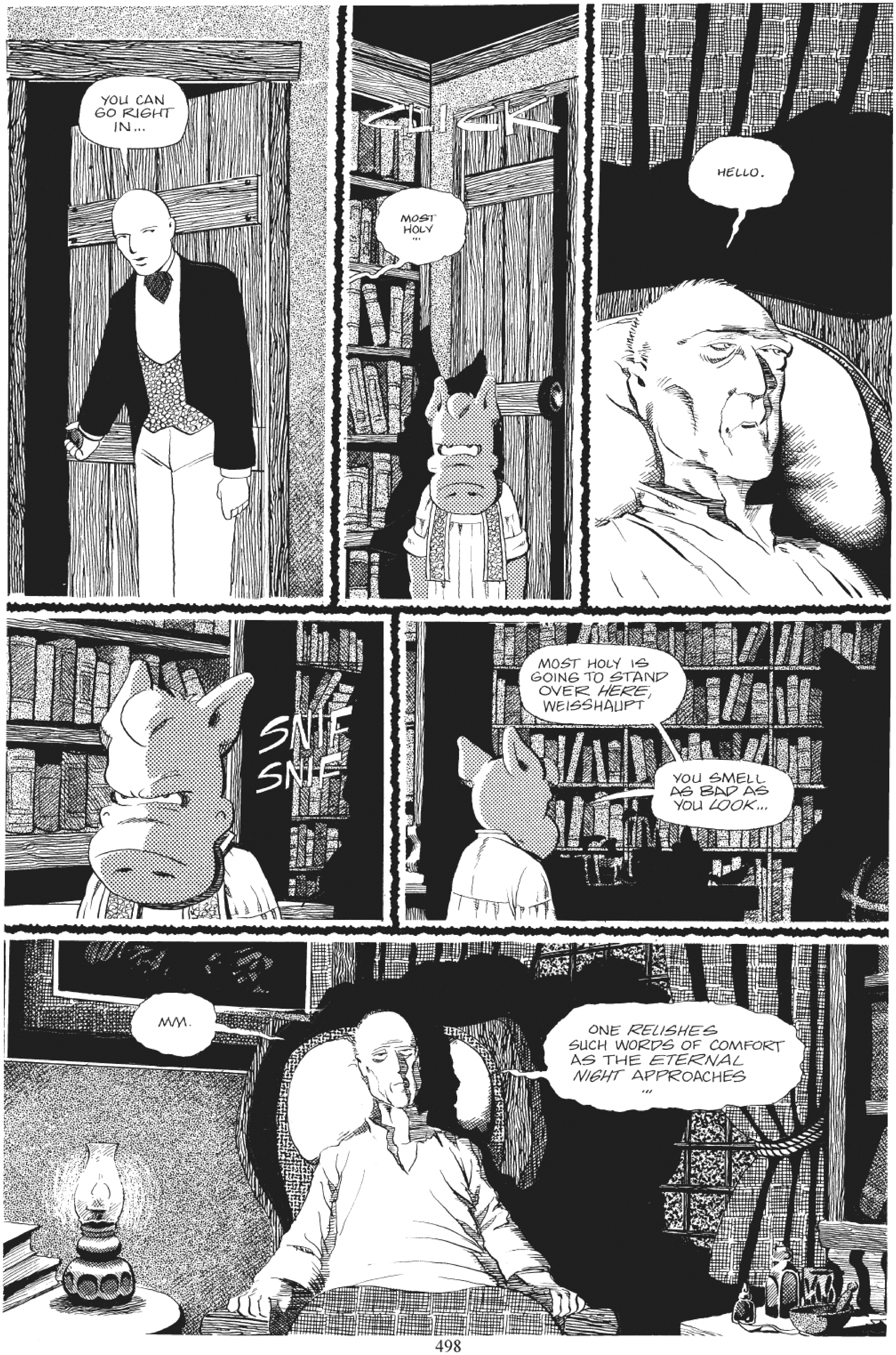

V
HE'S *DYING*. THAT'S ALL IT SAYS ...
WELL, I JUST WISH HE'D HURRY UP ABOUT IT
VARYING
IF HE HANGS ON FOR ANOTHER DAY OR TWO IT WOULD BE *MOST* INCONVENIENT ...
VARYING REASO
I'M *SURE* HE DOESN'T INTEND IT AS A PERSONAL SLIGHT, BISHOP POWERS
DON'T BE *STUPID*-- OF COURSE HE DOES
THAT MAN WOULD STAY ALIVE FOR *WEEKS* JUST TO *SPITE* ME...

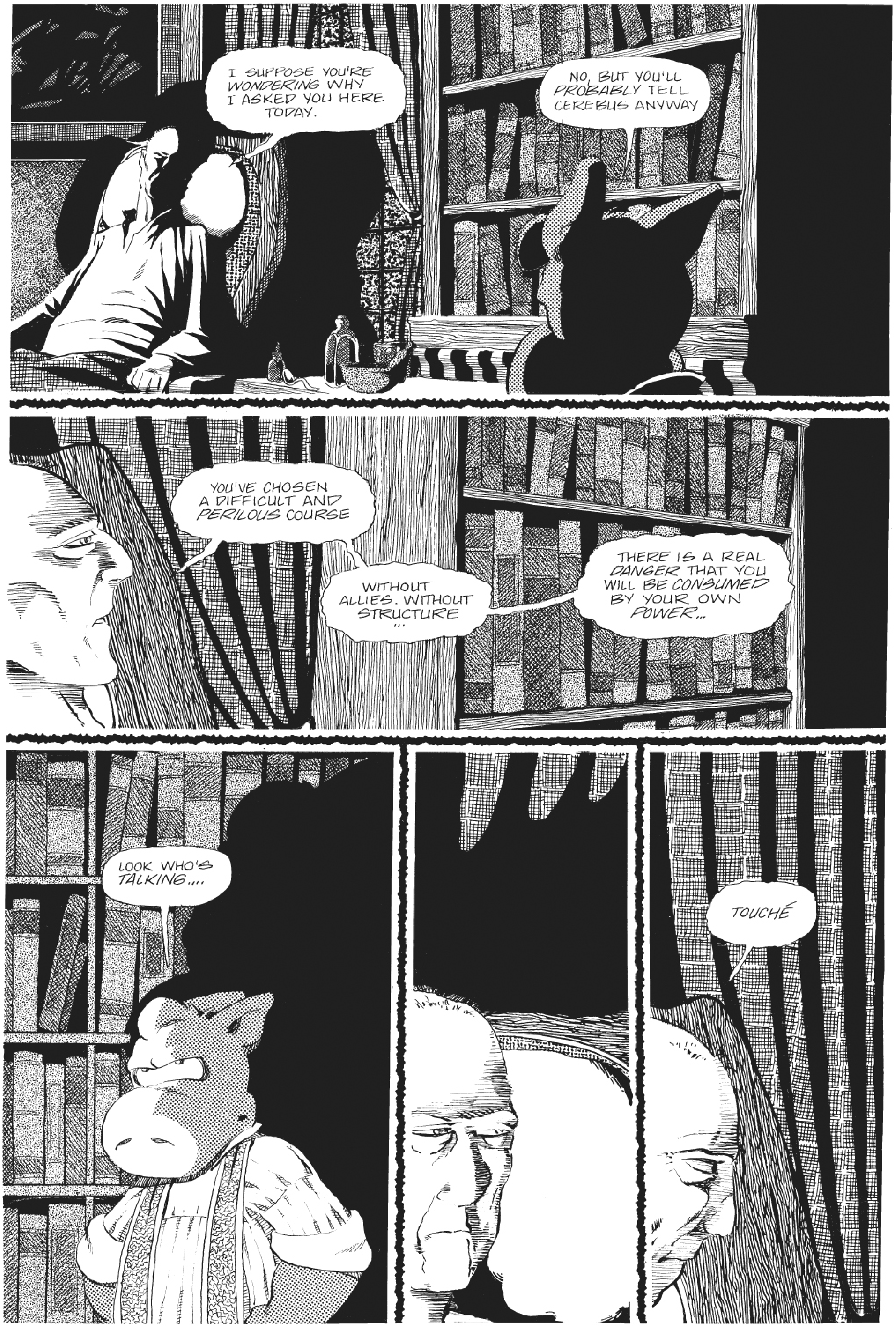

VARYING REASONS OF AS
PERHAPS IF WE WERE TO... *PRAY*... FOR TARIM TO TAKE HIM TO HIS,... FINAL REST
IT WOULD BE RATHER... *UNUSUAL* ...TO BE SURE... BUT...
REASONS OF ASSORTED
ONS OF ASSORTED DEPTHS
MM.
IT'S WORTH A *TRY*

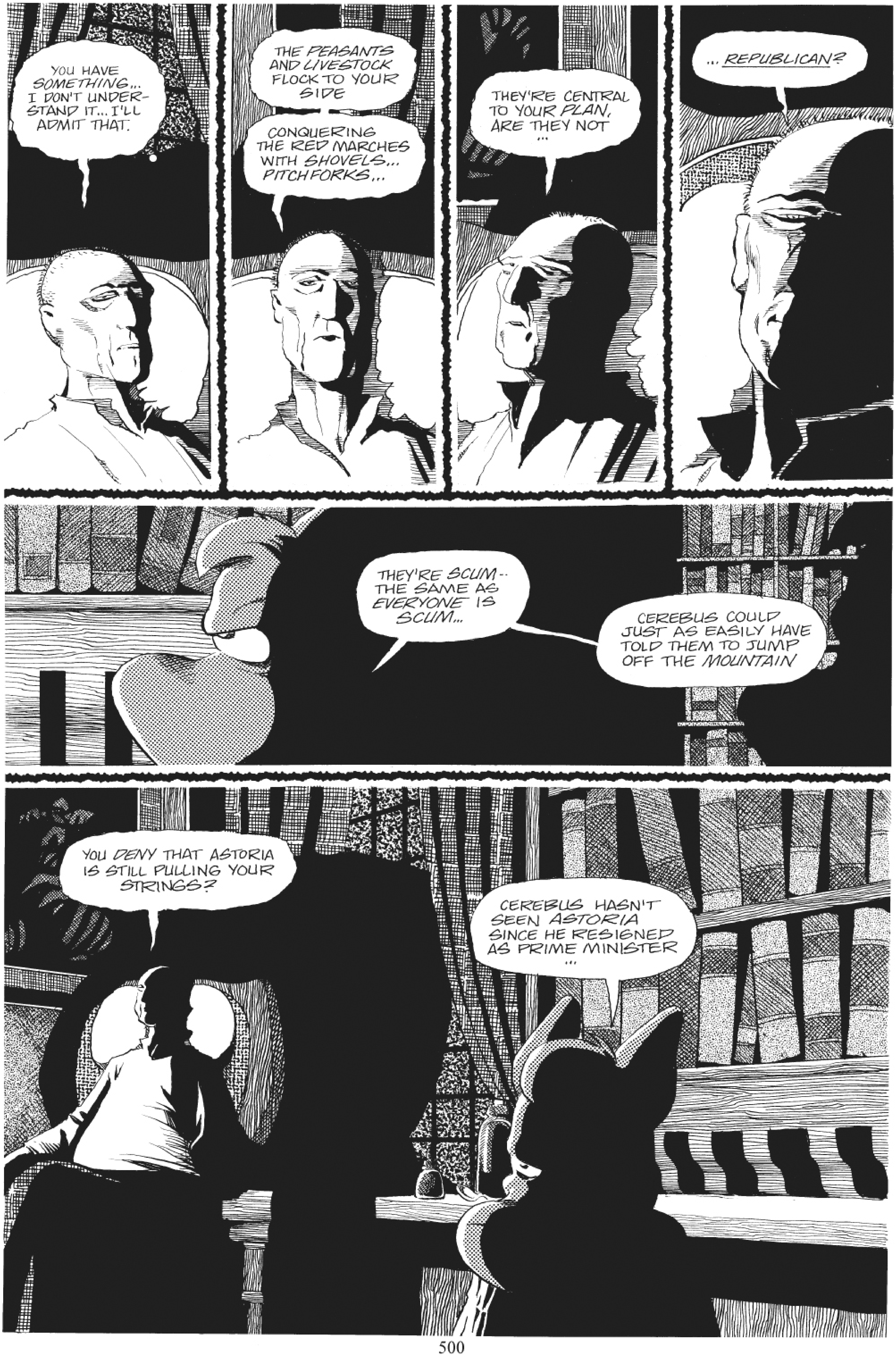

ASSORTED DEPTHS
SOMETHING HIDEOUSLY PAINFUL BUT QUICK, I SHOULD THINK
OF COURSE, BISHOP POWERS ... OF COURSE
D DEPTHS
UM... MOST HOLY?
S
WHAT.

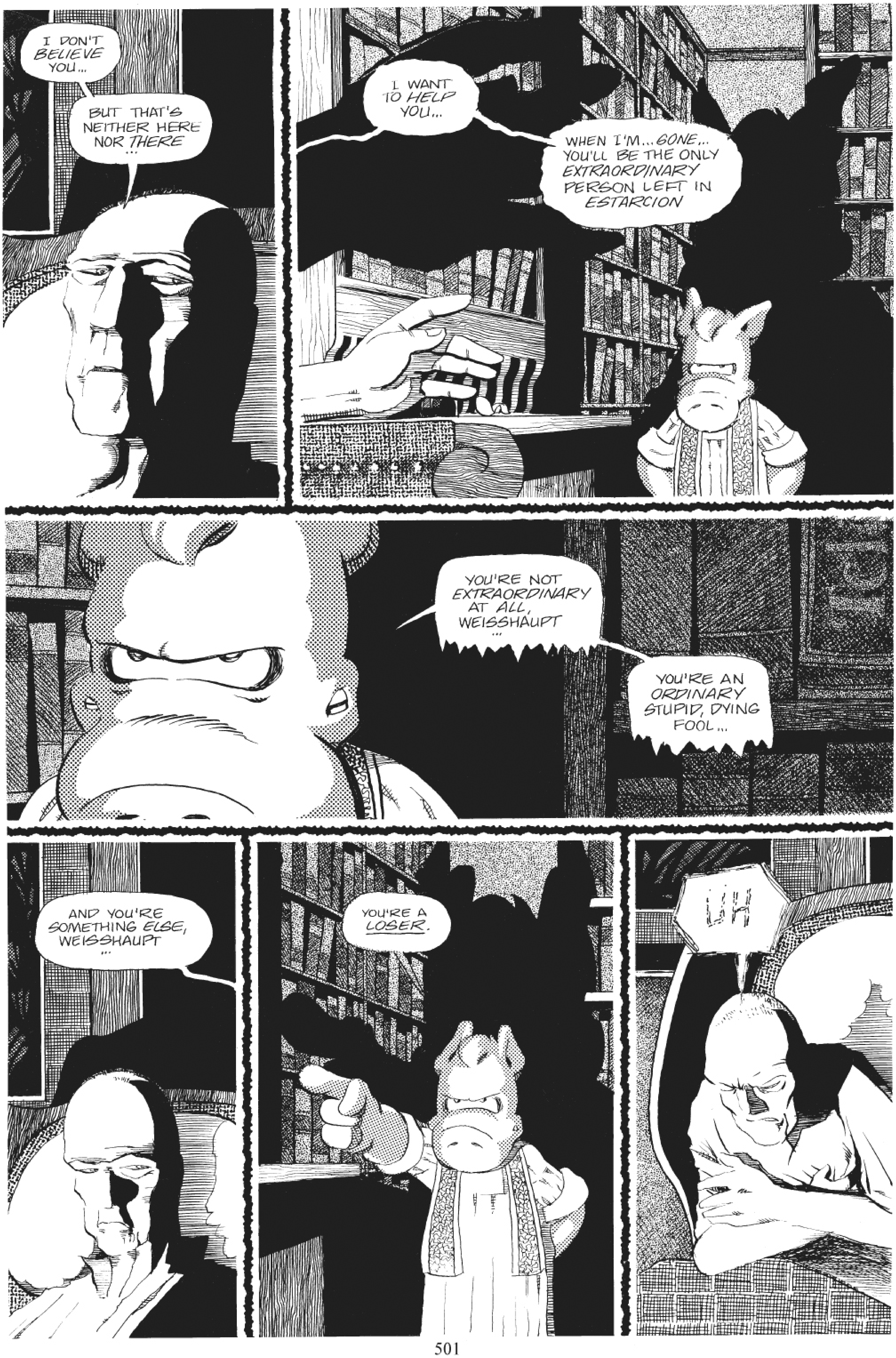

PRESIDENT WEISSHAUPT SENT A CARRIAGE FOR YOU
THE GUY SAYS HE'S *UM*-- DYING ...
SO?
HE SAYS THE *PRESIDENT* HAS SOME IMPORTANT THINGS TO TELL YOU...
ABOUT THE END OF THE WORLD ...
WHERE ARE *CEREBUS'* ROBES ...
RIGHT HERE ...

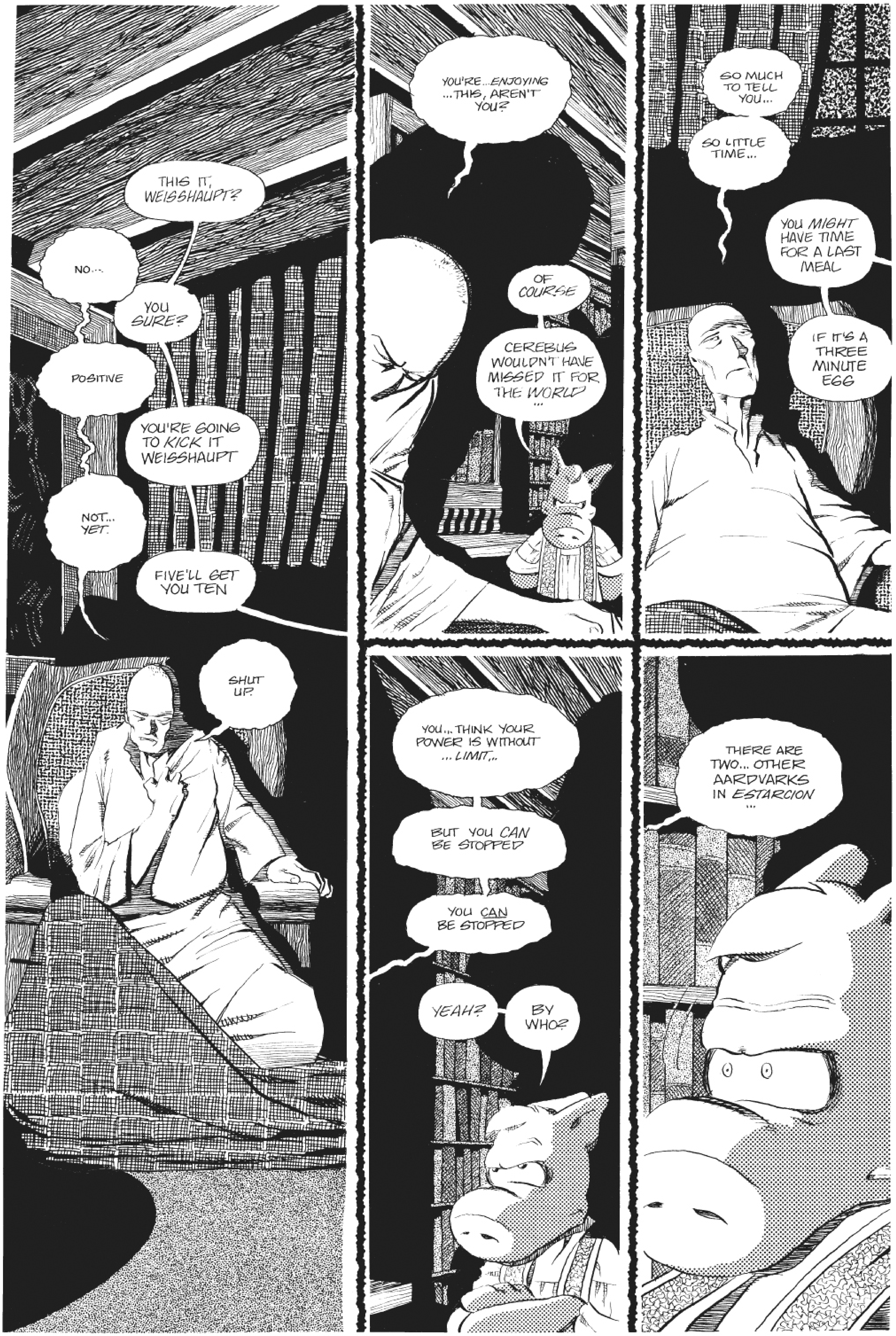

MOST HOLY ...
THE PRESIDENT IS EXPECTING YOU...

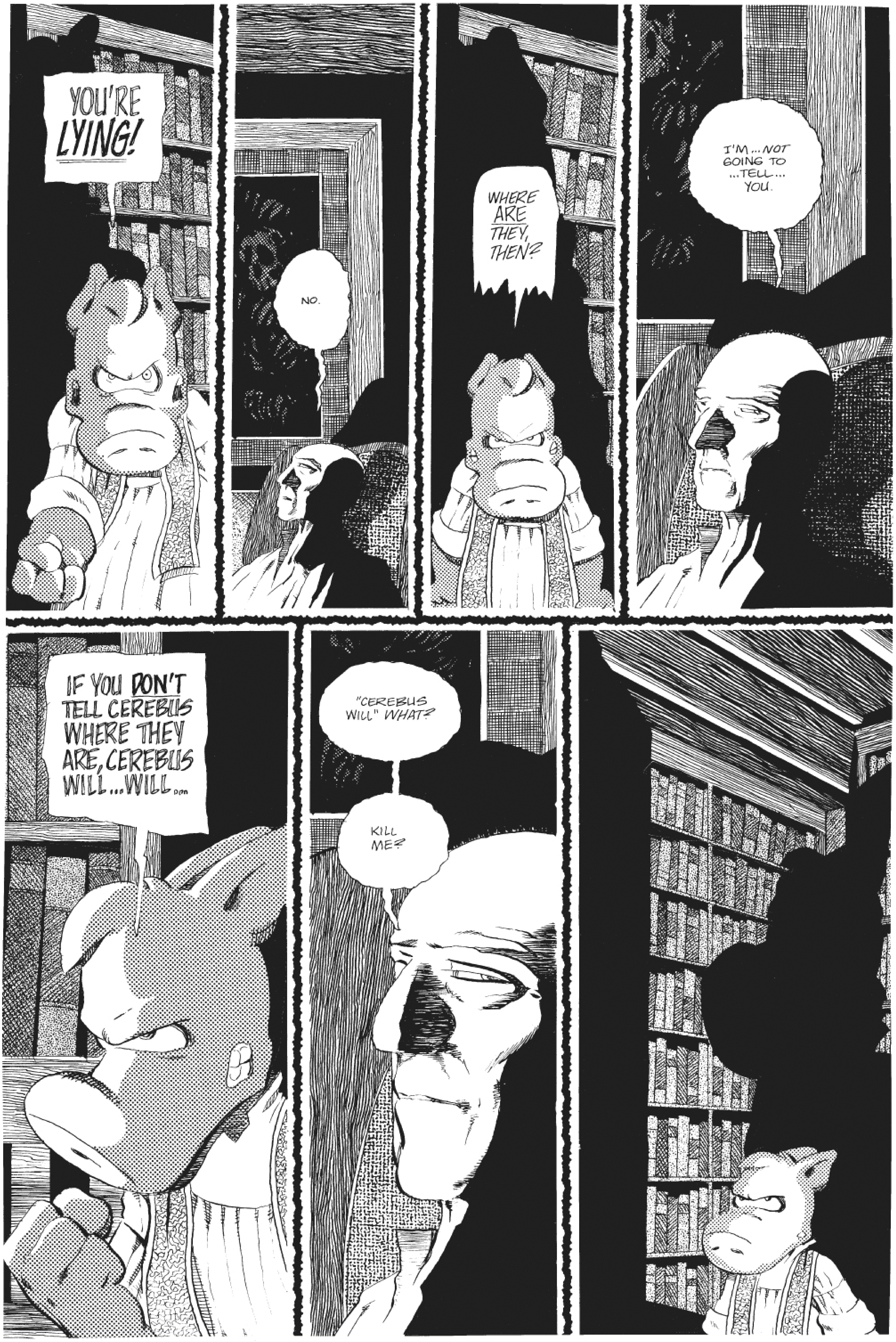

YOU CAN GO RIGHT IN...
CLICK
MOST HOLY ...
HELLO.
SNIF SNIF
MOST HOLY IS GOING TO STAND OVER *HERE*, WEISSHAUPT
YOU SMELL AS BAD AS YOU *LOOK*...
MM.
ONE *RELISHES* SUCH WORDS OF COMFORT AS THE *ETERNAL NIGHT* APPROACHES ...

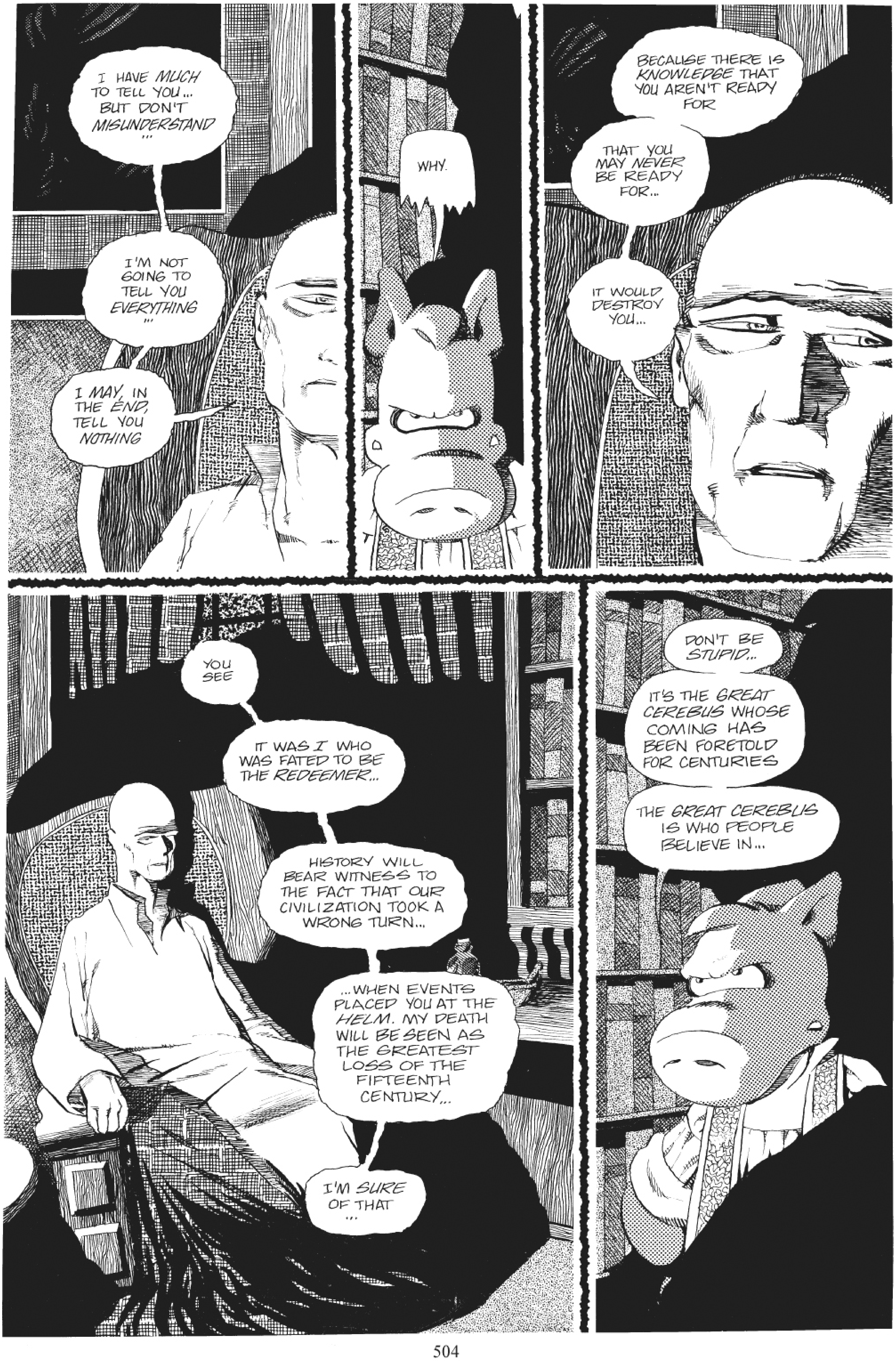

I SUPPOSE YOU'RE *WONDERING* WHY I ASKED YOU HERE TODAY.
NO, BUT YOU'LL *PROBABLY* TELL CEREBUS ANYWAY
YOU'VE CHOSEN A DIFFICULT AND *PERILOUS* COURSE
WITHOUT ALLIES. WITHOUT STRUCTURE ...
THERE IS A REAL *DANGER* THAT YOU WILL BE *CONSUMED* BY YOUR OWN *POWER*...
LOOK WHO'S *TALKING*....
TOUCHÉ

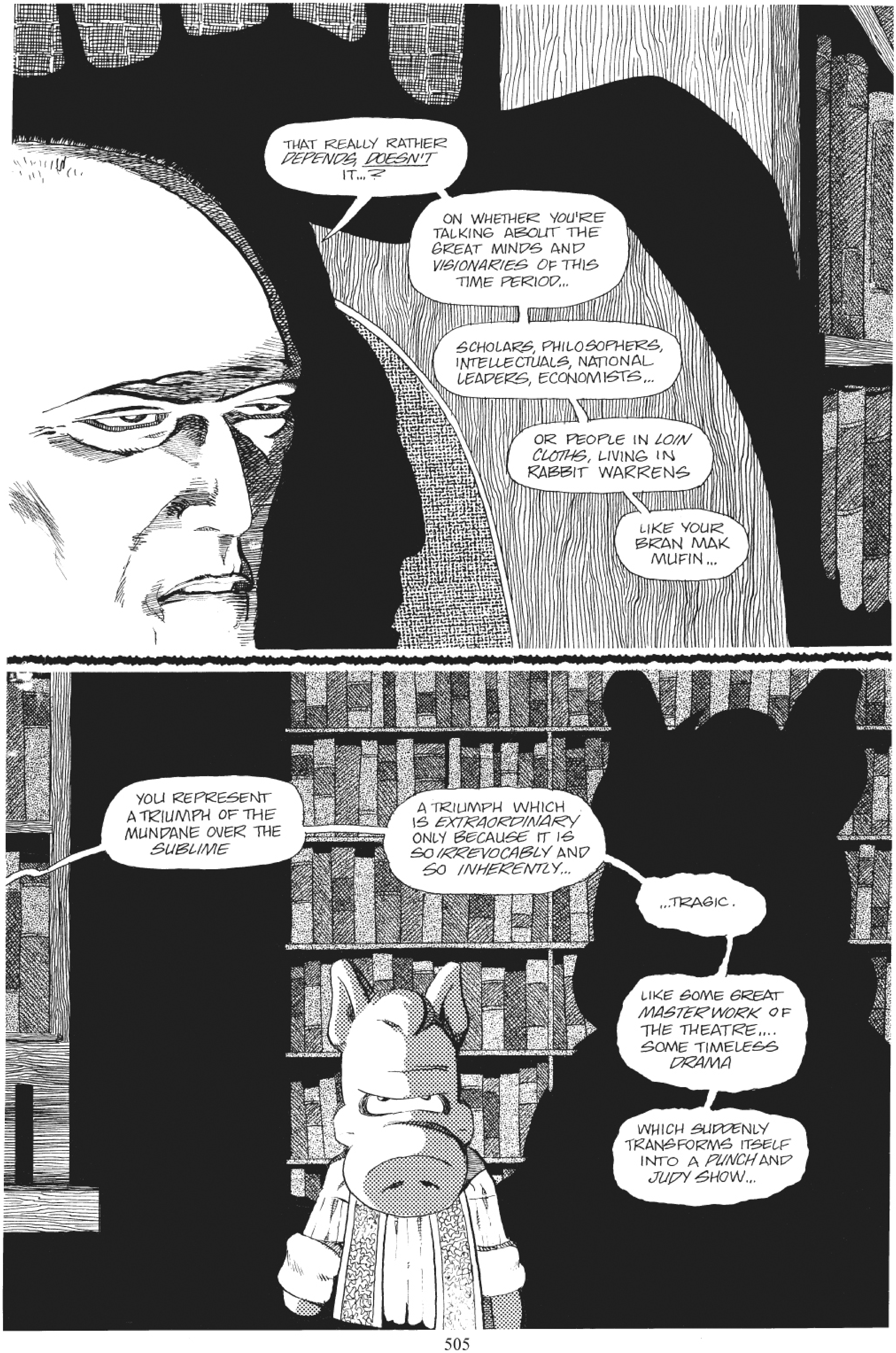

YOU HAVE SOMETHING... I DON'T UNDERSTAND IT... I'LL ADMIT THAT.
THE PEASANTS AND LIVESTOCK FLOCK TO YOUR SIDE
CONQUERING THE RED MARCHES WITH SHOVELS... PITCHFORKS...
THEY'RE CENTRAL TO YOUR PLAN, ARE THEY NOT ...
... REPUBLICAN?
THEY'RE SCUM -- THE SAME AS EVERYONE IS SCUM...
CEREBUS COULD JUST AS EASILY HAVE TOLD THEM TO JUMP OFF THE MOUNTAIN
YOU DENY THAT ASTORIA IS STILL PULLING YOUR STRINGS?
CEREBUS HASN'T SEEN ASTORIA SINCE HE RESIGNED AS PRIME MINISTER ...

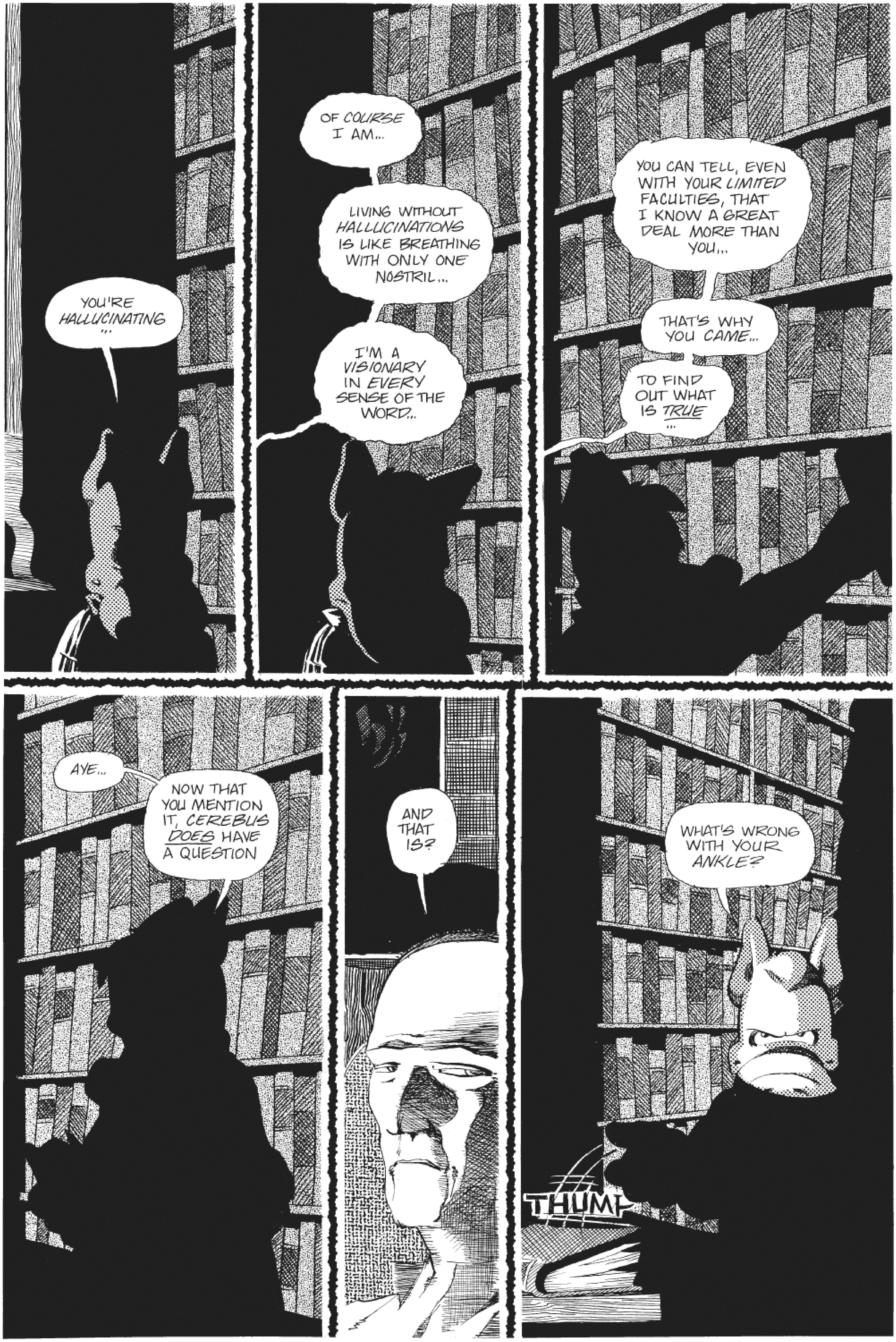

I DON'T *BELIEVE* YOU...
BUT THAT'S NEITHER HERE NOR *THERE* ...
I WANT TO *HELP* YOU...
WHEN I'M... *GONE*... YOU'LL BE THE ONLY *EXTRAORDINARY* PERSON LEFT IN *ESTARCION*
YOU'RE NOT *EXTRAORDINARY* AT *ALL*, WEISSHAUPT ...
YOU'RE AN *ORDINARY* STUPID, DYING FOOL...
AND YOU'RE SOMETHING *ELSE*, WEISSHAUPT ...
YOU'RE A *LOSER*.
UH

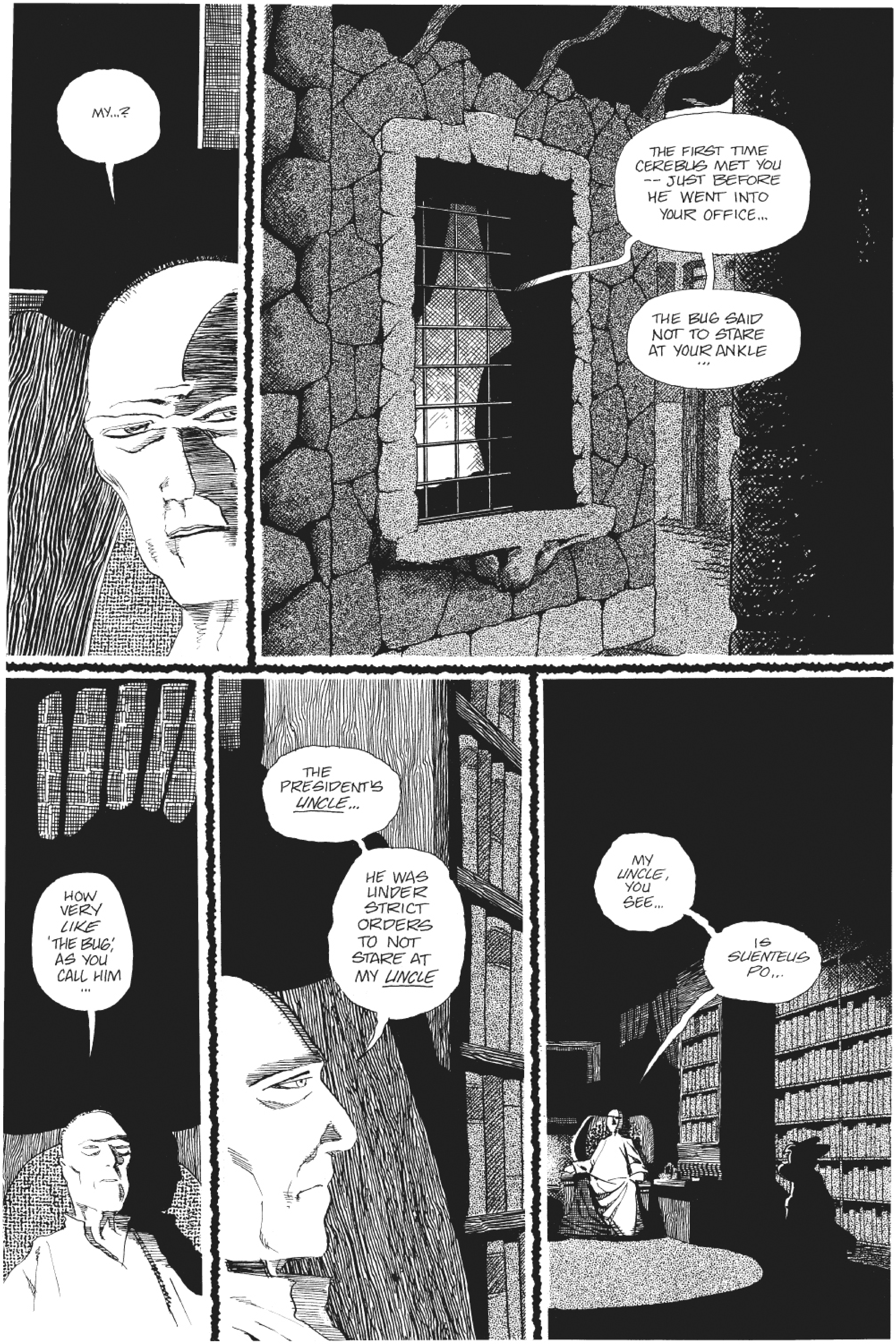

THIS IT, WEISSHAUPT?
NO...
YOU SURE?
POSITIVE
YOU'RE GOING TO KICK IT WEISSHAUPT
NOT... YET.
FIVE'LL GET YOU TEN
YOU'RE...ENJOYING ...THIS, AREN'T YOU?
OF COURSE
CEREBUS WOULDN'T HAVE MISSED IT FOR THE WORLD ...
SO MUCH TO TELL YOU...
SO LITTLE TIME...
YOU MIGHT HAVE TIME FOR A LAST MEAL
IF IT'S A THREE MINUTE EGG
SHUT UP.
YOU... THINK YOUR POWER IS WITHOUT ... LIMIT...
BUT YOU CAN BE STOPPED
YOU CAN BE STOPPED
YEAH?
BY WHO?
THERE ARE TWO... OTHER AARDVARKS IN ESTARCION ...

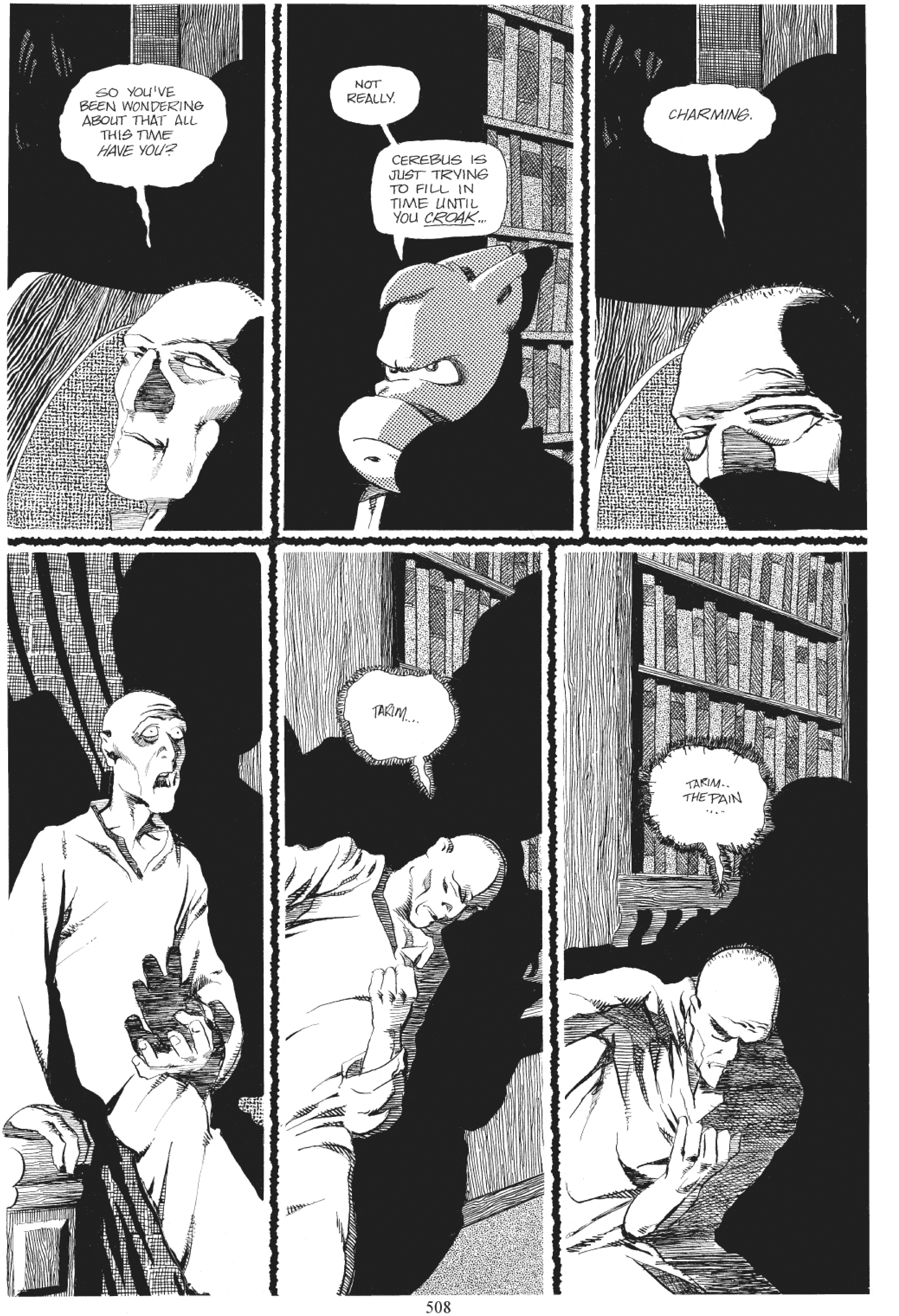

YOU'RE *LYING!*
NO.
WHERE ARE THEY, THEN?
I'M ... *NOT* GOING TO ... TELL ... YOU.
IF YOU **DON'T** TELL CEREBUS WHERE THEY ARE, CEREBUS WILL ... WILL ...
"CEREBUS WILL" *WHAT?*
KILL ME?

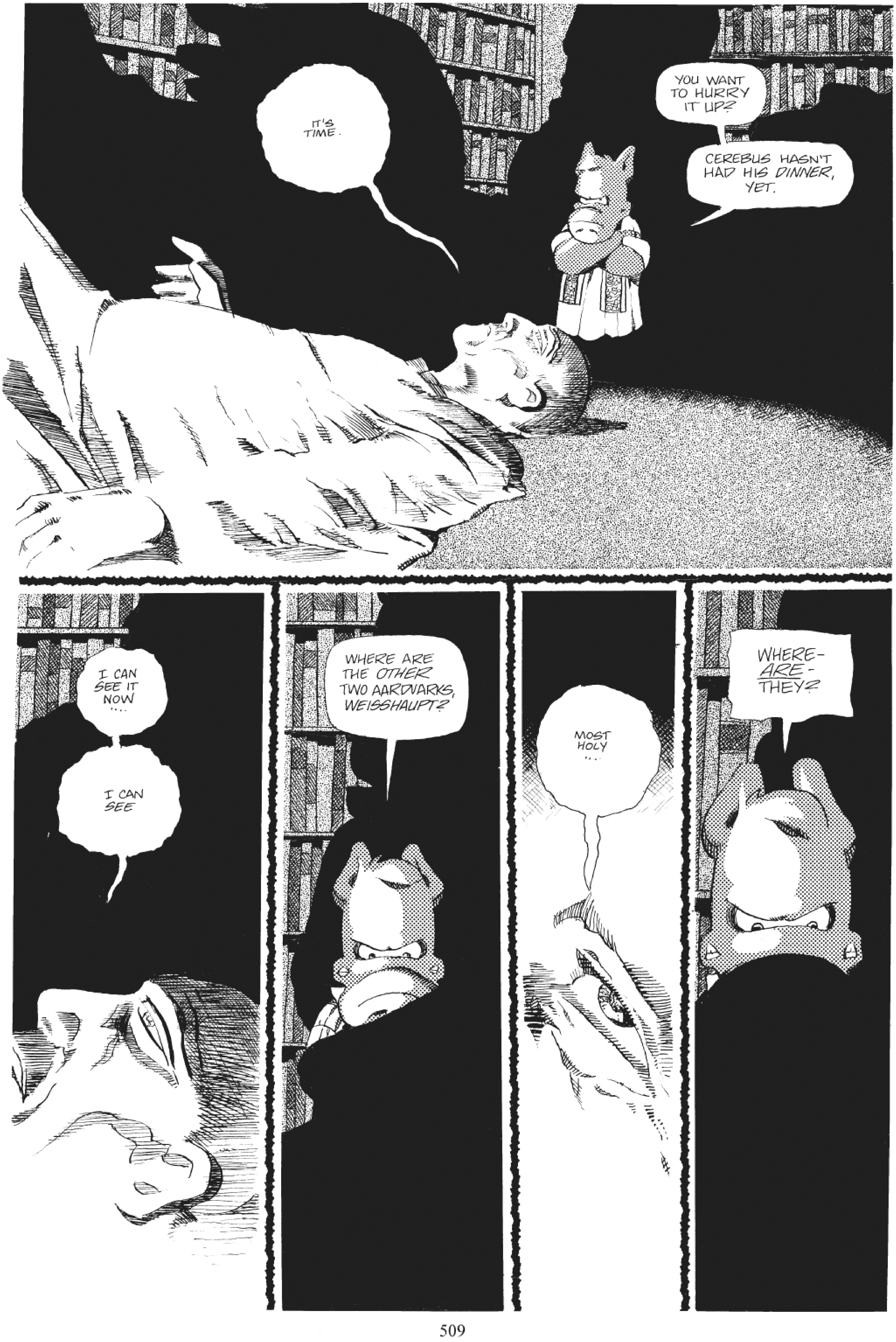

I HAVE *MUCH* TO TELL YOU... BUT DON'T *MISUNDERSTAND* ...
I'M NOT GOING TO TELL YOU *EVERYTHING* ...
I *MAY*, IN THE *END*, TELL YOU *NOTHING*
WHY.
BECAUSE THERE IS *KNOWLEDGE* THAT YOU AREN'T READY FOR
THAT YOU MAY *NEVER* BE READY FOR...
IT WOULD DESTROY YOU...
YOU SEE
IT WAS *I* WHO WAS FATED TO BE THE *REDEEMER*...
HISTORY WILL BEAR WITNESS TO THE FACT THAT OUR CIVILIZATION TOOK A WRONG TURN...
...WHEN EVENTS PLACED YOU AT THE *HELM*. MY DEATH WILL BE SEEN AS THE *GREATEST* LOSS OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY...
I'M *SURE* OF THAT ...
DON'T BE *STUPID*...
IT'S THE *GREAT CEREBUS* WHOSE COMING HAS BEEN FORETOLD FOR CENTURIES
THE *GREAT CEREBUS* IS WHO PEOPLE BELIEVE IN...

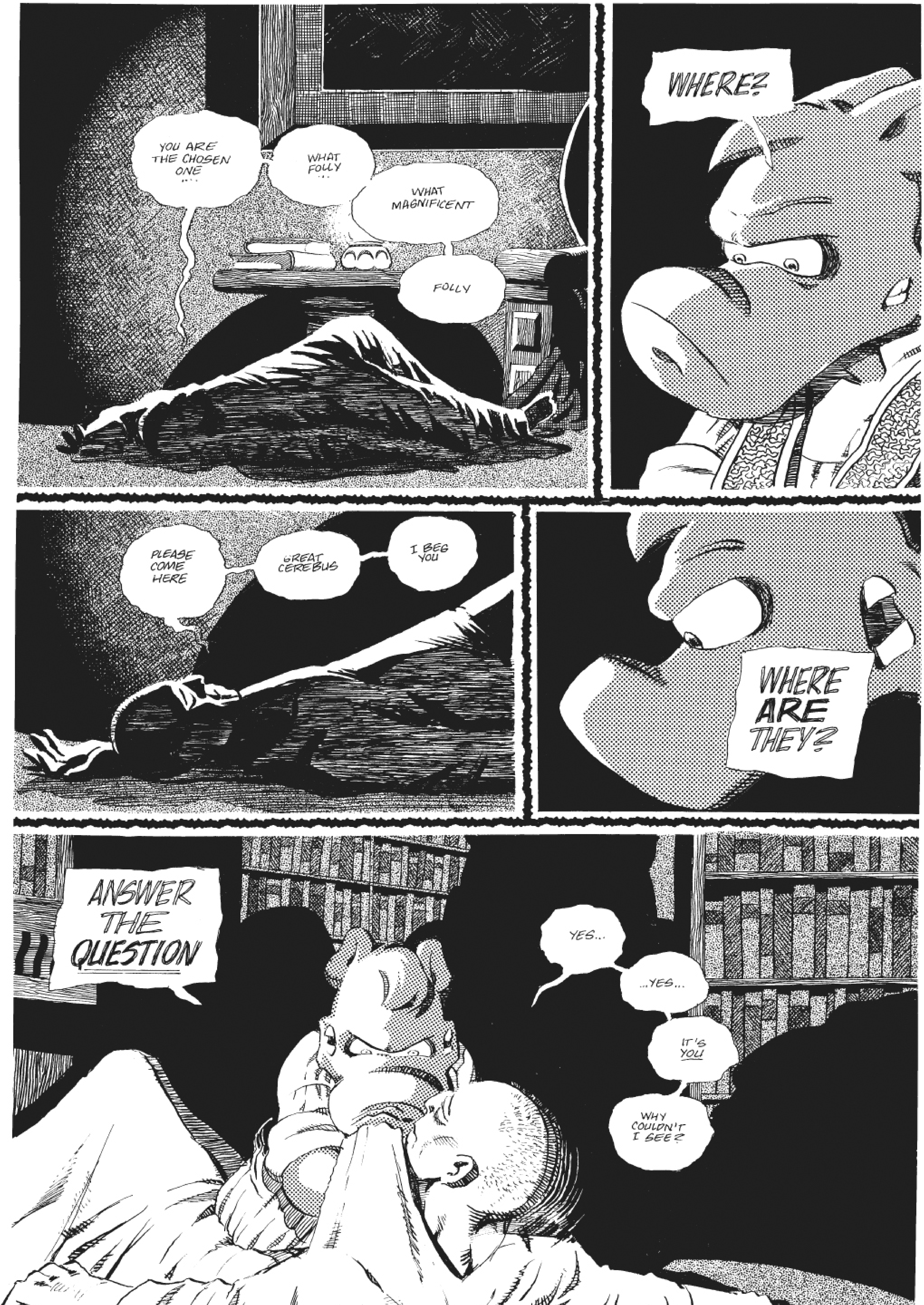

THAT REALLY RATHER *DEPENDS, DOESN'T* IT...?
ON WHETHER YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT THE GREAT MINDS AND *VISIONARIES* OF THIS TIME PERIOD...
SCHOLARS, PHILOSOPHERS, INTELLECTUALS, NATIONAL LEADERS, ECONOMISTS...
OR PEOPLE IN *LOIN CLOTHS*, LIVING IN RABBIT WARRENS
LIKE YOUR BRAN MAK MUFIN...
YOU REPRESENT A TRIUMPH OF THE MUNDANE OVER THE *SUBLIME*
A TRIUMPH WHICH IS *EXTRAORDINARY* ONLY BECAUSE IT IS *SO IRREVOCABLY* AND SO *INHERENTLY*...
...TRAGIC.
LIKE SOME GREAT *MASTERWORK* OF THE THEATRE.... SOME TIMELESS *DRAMA*
WHICH SUDDENLY TRANSFORMS ITSELF INTO A *PUNCH* AND *JUDY* SHOW...

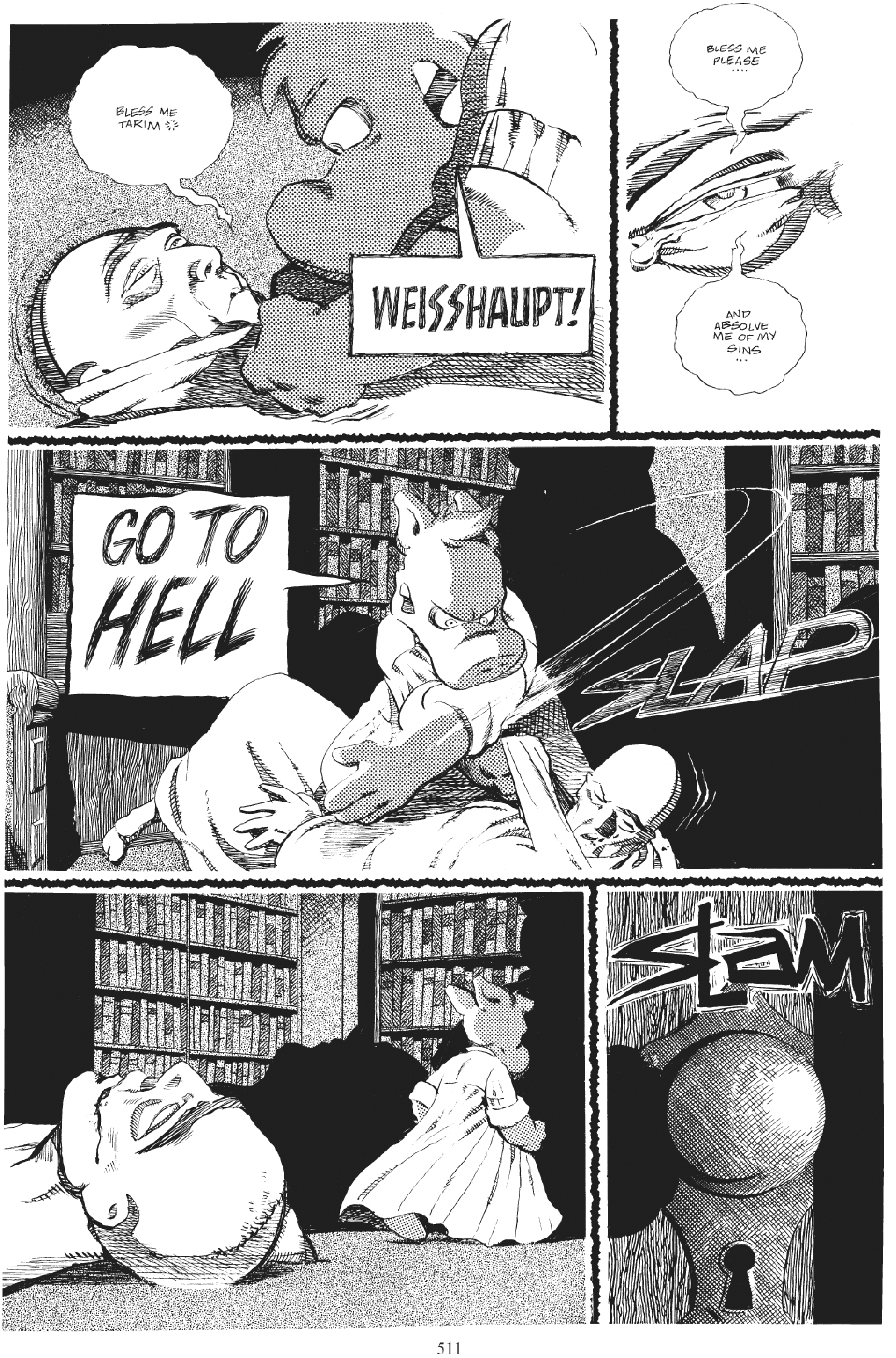

YOU'RE *HALLUCINATING* ...
OF COURSE I AM...
LIVING WITHOUT *HALLUCINATIONS* IS LIKE BREATHING WITH ONLY ONE NOSTRIL...
I'M A *VISIONARY* IN *EVERY* SENSE OF THE WORD...
YOU CAN TELL, EVEN WITH YOUR *LIMITED* FACULTIES, THAT I KNOW A GREAT DEAL MORE THAN YOU...
THAT'S WHY YOU *CAME*...
TO FIND OUT WHAT IS *TRUE* ...
AYE...
NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT, *CEREBUS* *DOES* HAVE A QUESTION
AND THAT IS?
WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOUR *ANKLE*?
THUMP

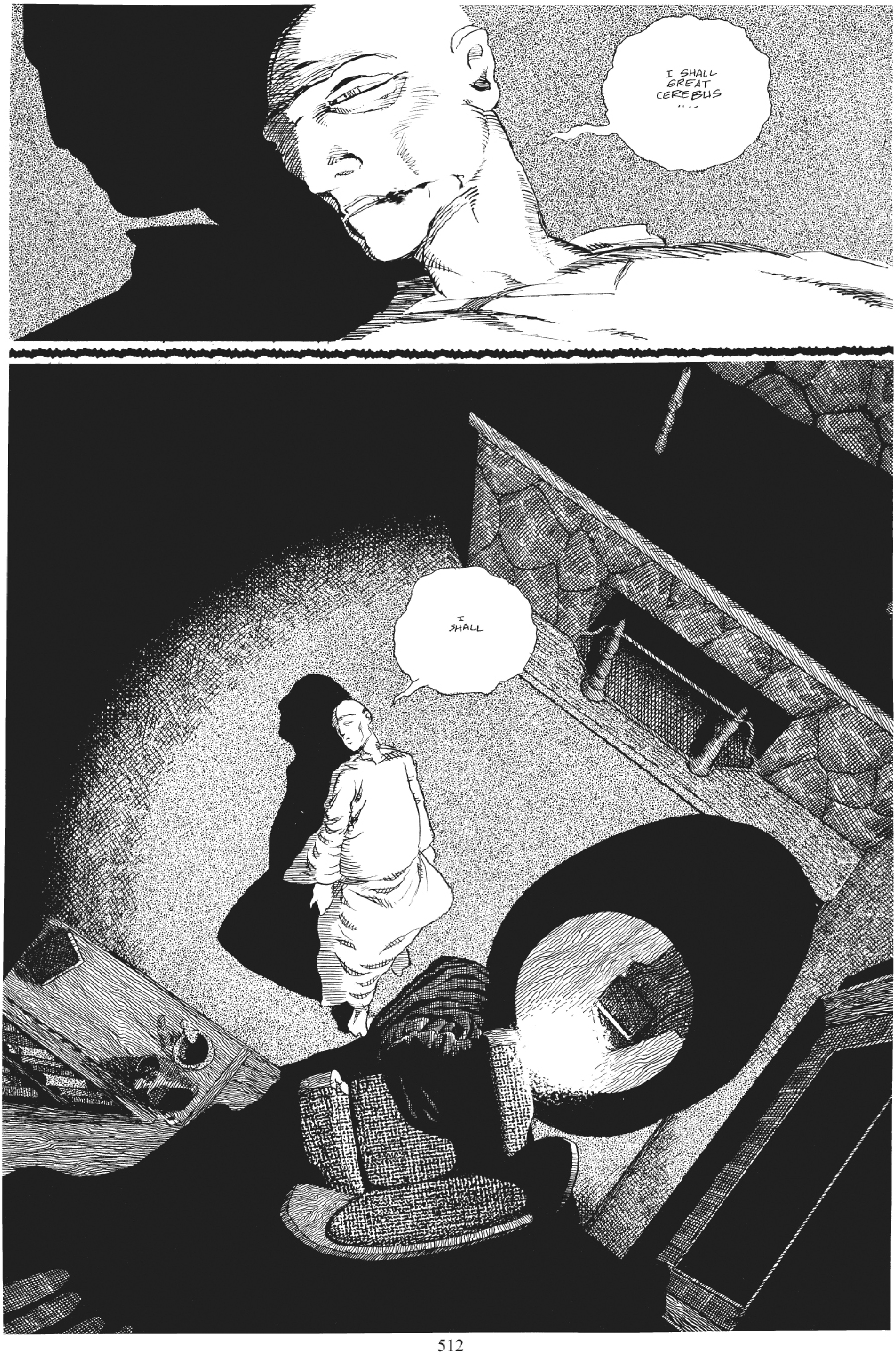

MY...?
THE FIRST TIME CEREBUS MET YOU -- JUST BEFORE HE WENT INTO YOUR OFFICE...
THE BUG SAID NOT TO STARE AT YOUR ANKLE ...
HOW VERY LIKE 'THE BUG,' AS YOU CALL HIM ...
THE PRESIDENT'S UNCLE...
HE WAS UNDER STRICT ORDERS TO NOT STARE AT MY UNCLE
MY UNCLE, YOU SEE...
IS SUENTEUS PO...

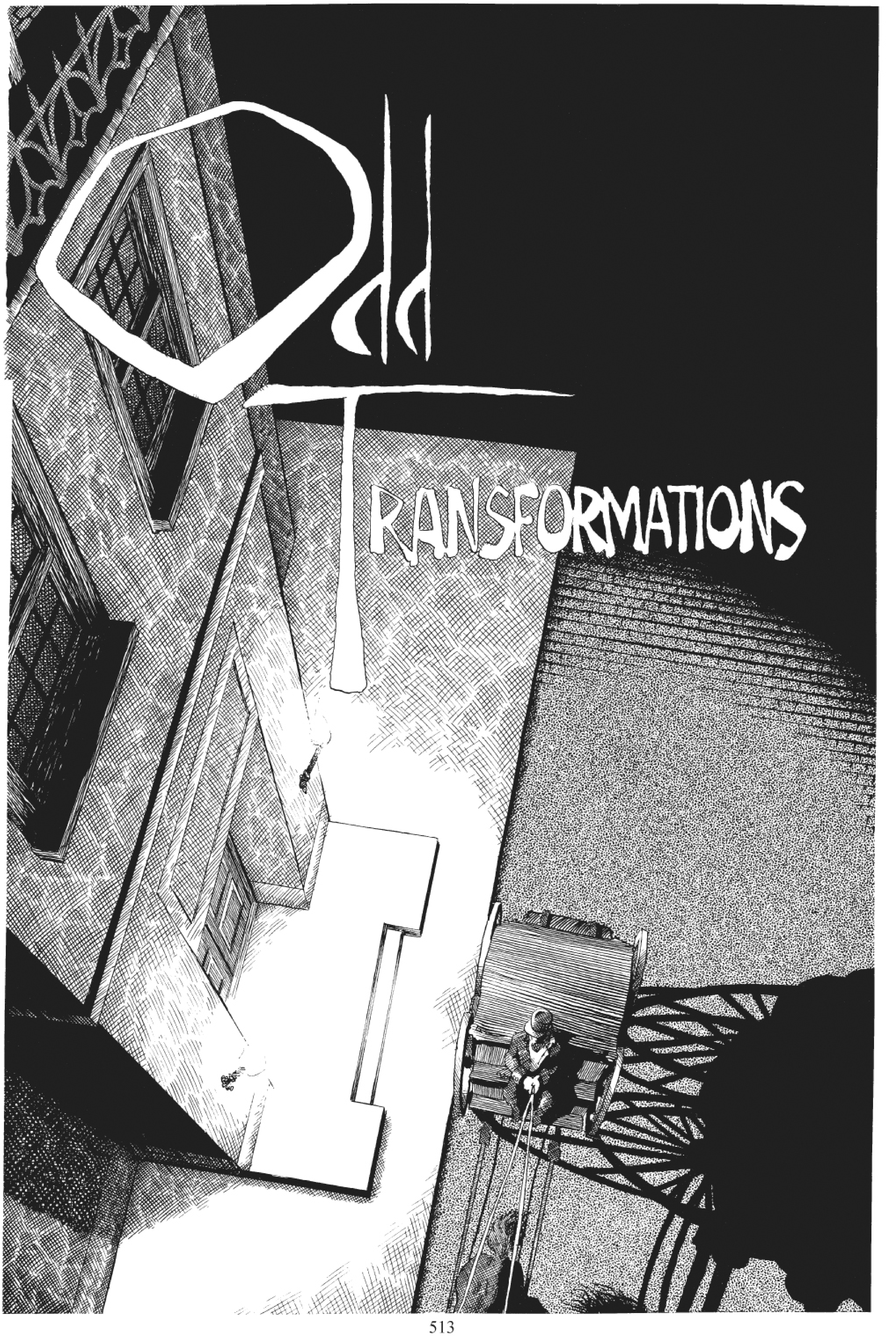

SO YOU'VE BEEN WONDERING ABOUT THAT ALL THIS TIME *HAVE YOU?*
NOT REALLY.
CEREBUS IS JUST TRYING TO FILL IN TIME *UNTIL* YOU *CROAK*...
CHARMING.
TARIM...
TARIM.. THE PAIN ...

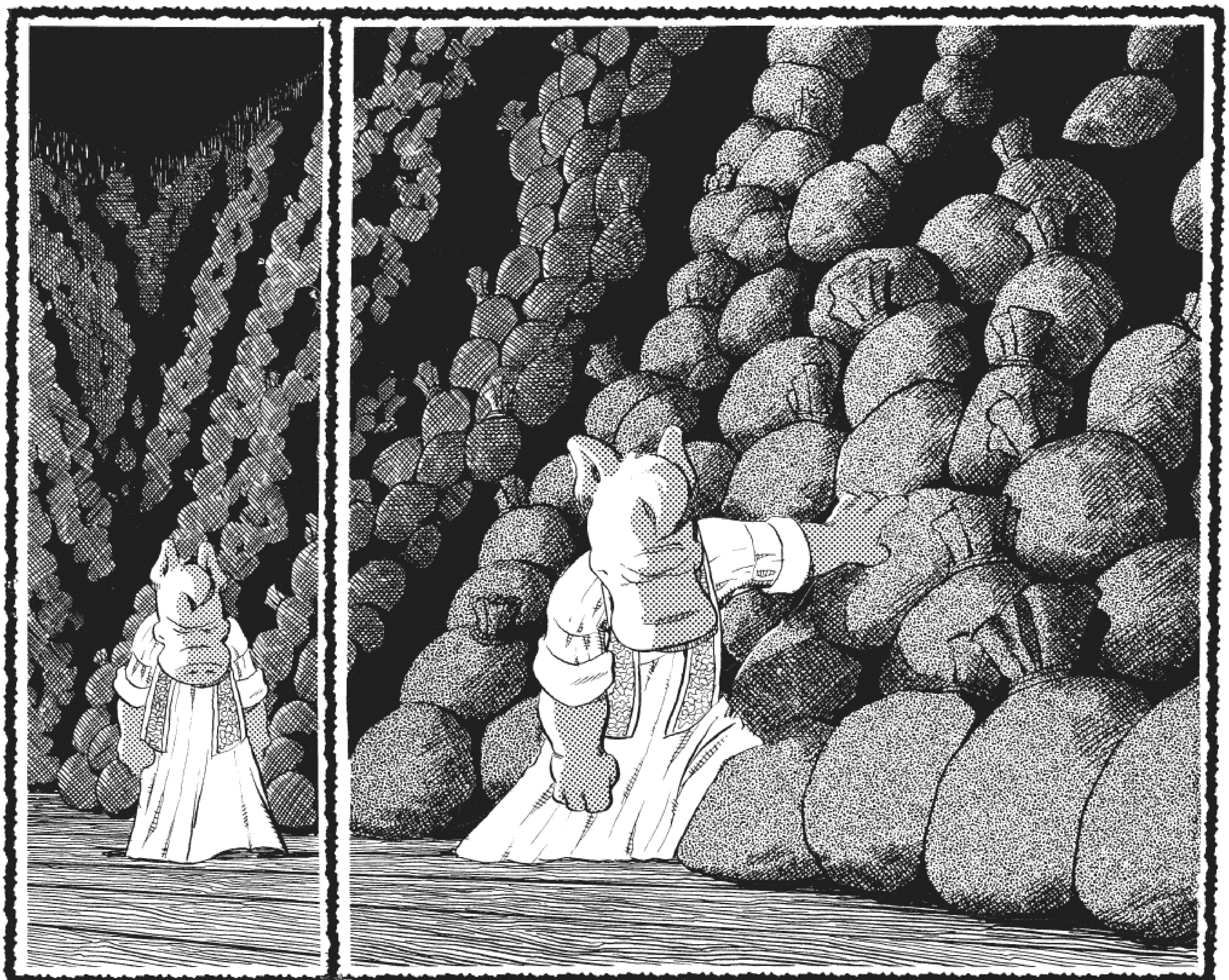

IT'S TIME.
YOU WANT TO HURRY IT UP?
CEREBUS HASN'T HAD HIS *DINNER*, YET.
I CAN SEE IT NOW ....
I CAN SEE
WHERE ARE THE *OTHER* TWO AARDVARKS, WEISSHAUPT?
MOST HOLY ...
WHERE- *ARE*- THEY?

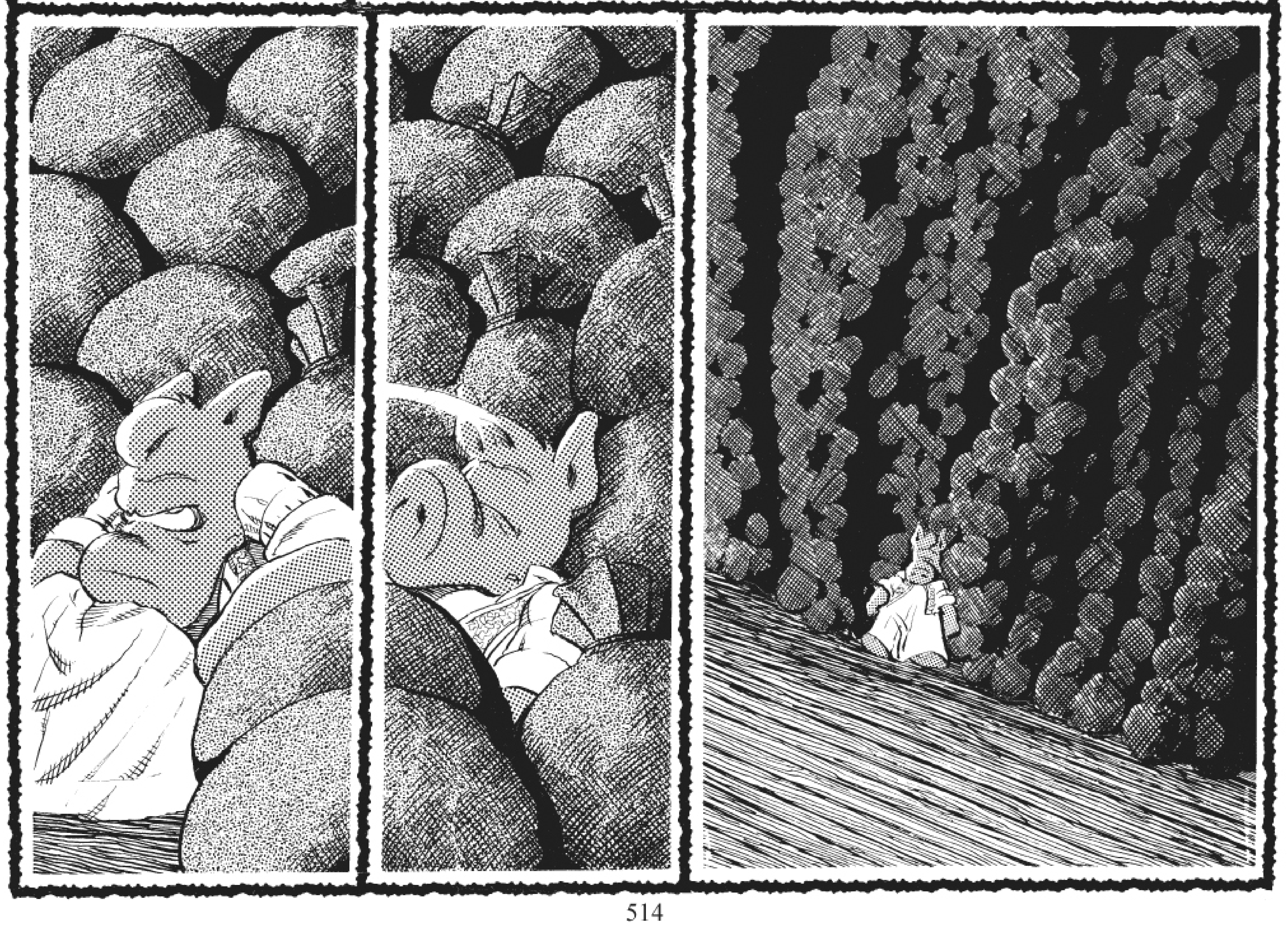

YOU ARE THE CHOSEN ONE ...
WHAT FOLLY ...
WHAT MAGNIFICENT
FOLLY
WHERE?
PLEASE COME HERE
GREAT CEREBUS
I BEG YOU
WHERE ARE THEY?
ANSWER THE QUESTION
YES...
...YES...
IT'S YOU
WHY COULDN'T I SEE?

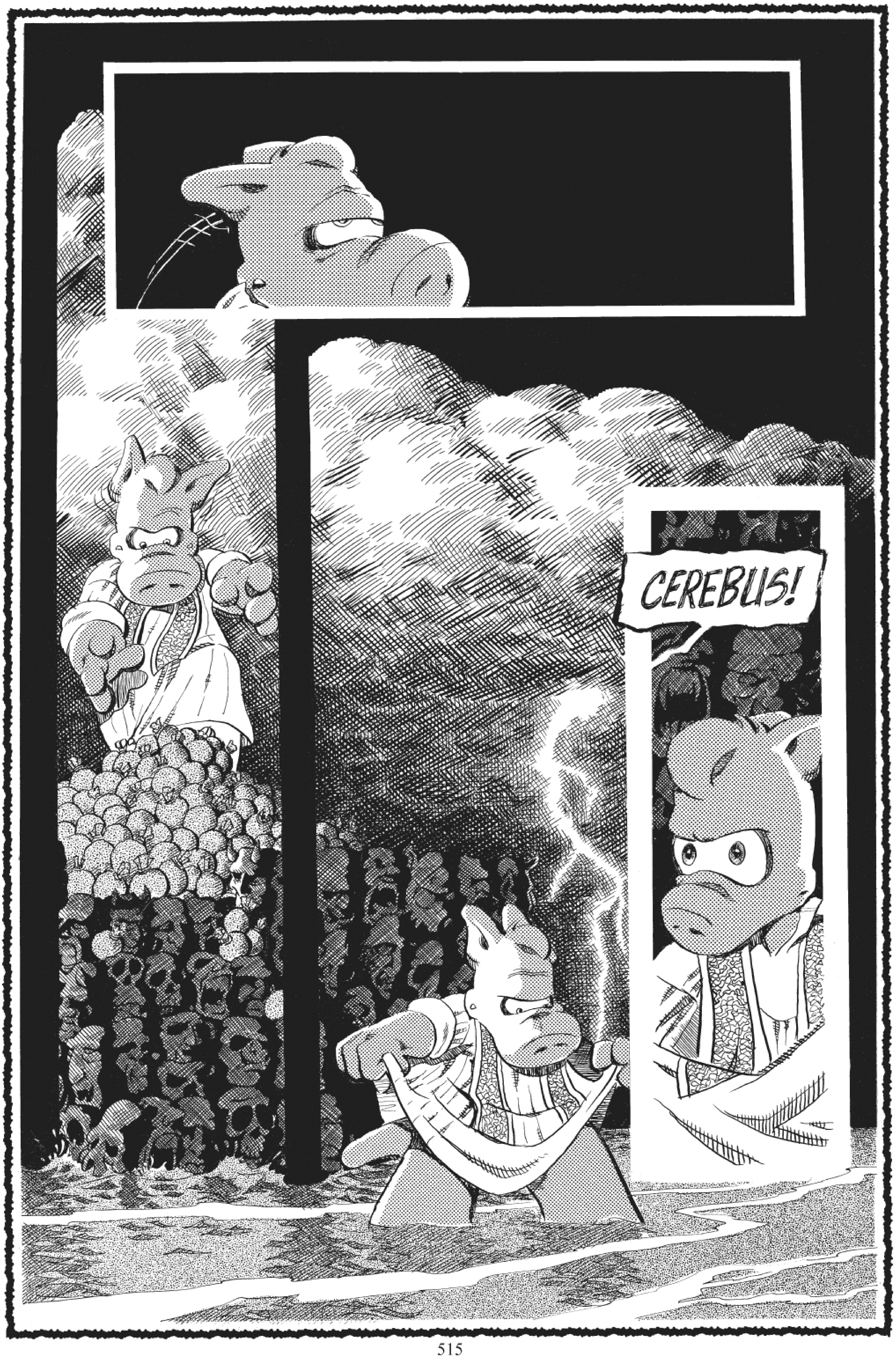

BLESS ME TARIM
WEISSHAUPT!
BLESS ME PLEASE ....
AND ABSOLVE ME OF MY SINS ...
GO TO HELL
SLAP
SLAM

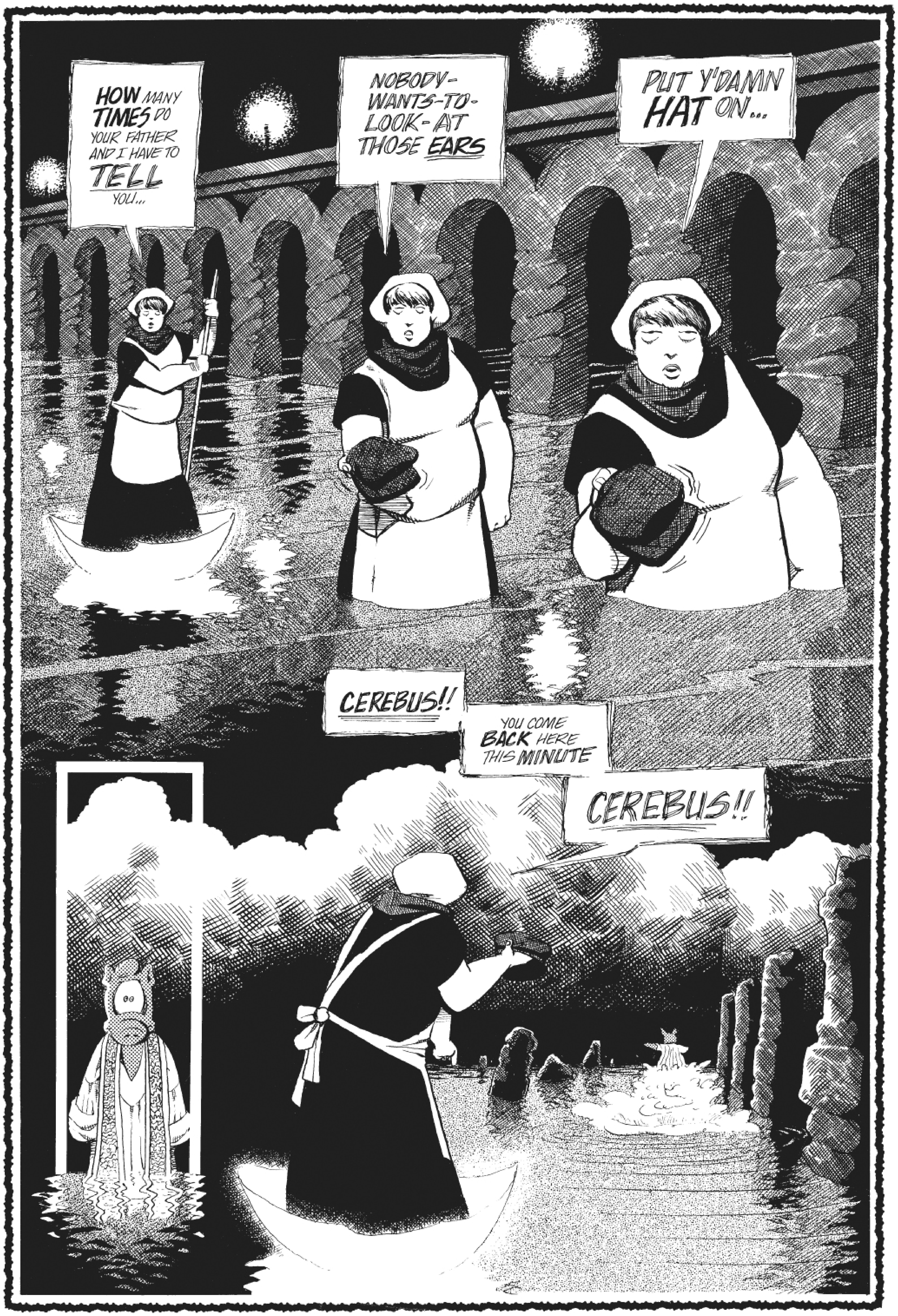

I SHALL GREAT CEREBUS ...
I SHALL

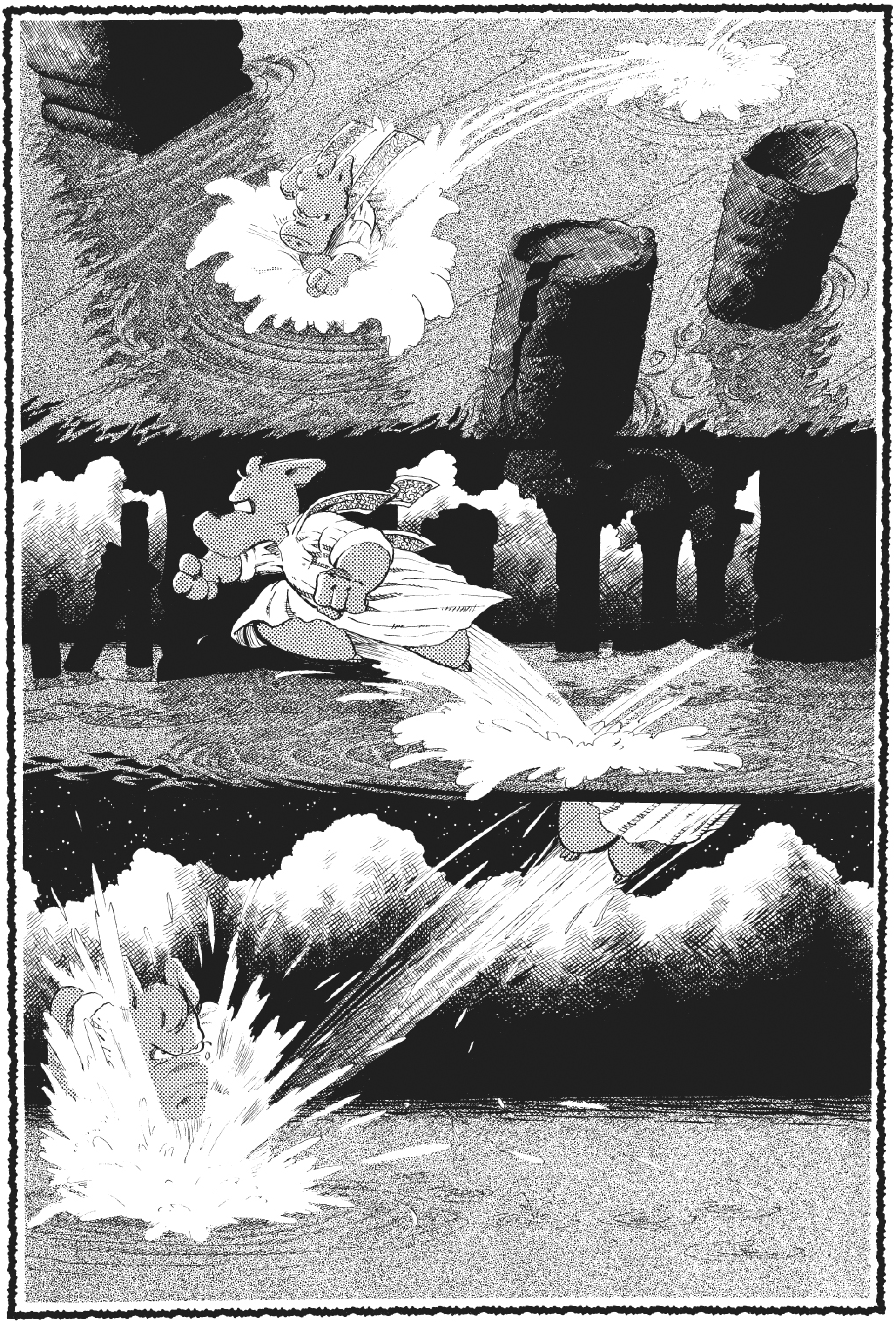

Odd Transformations

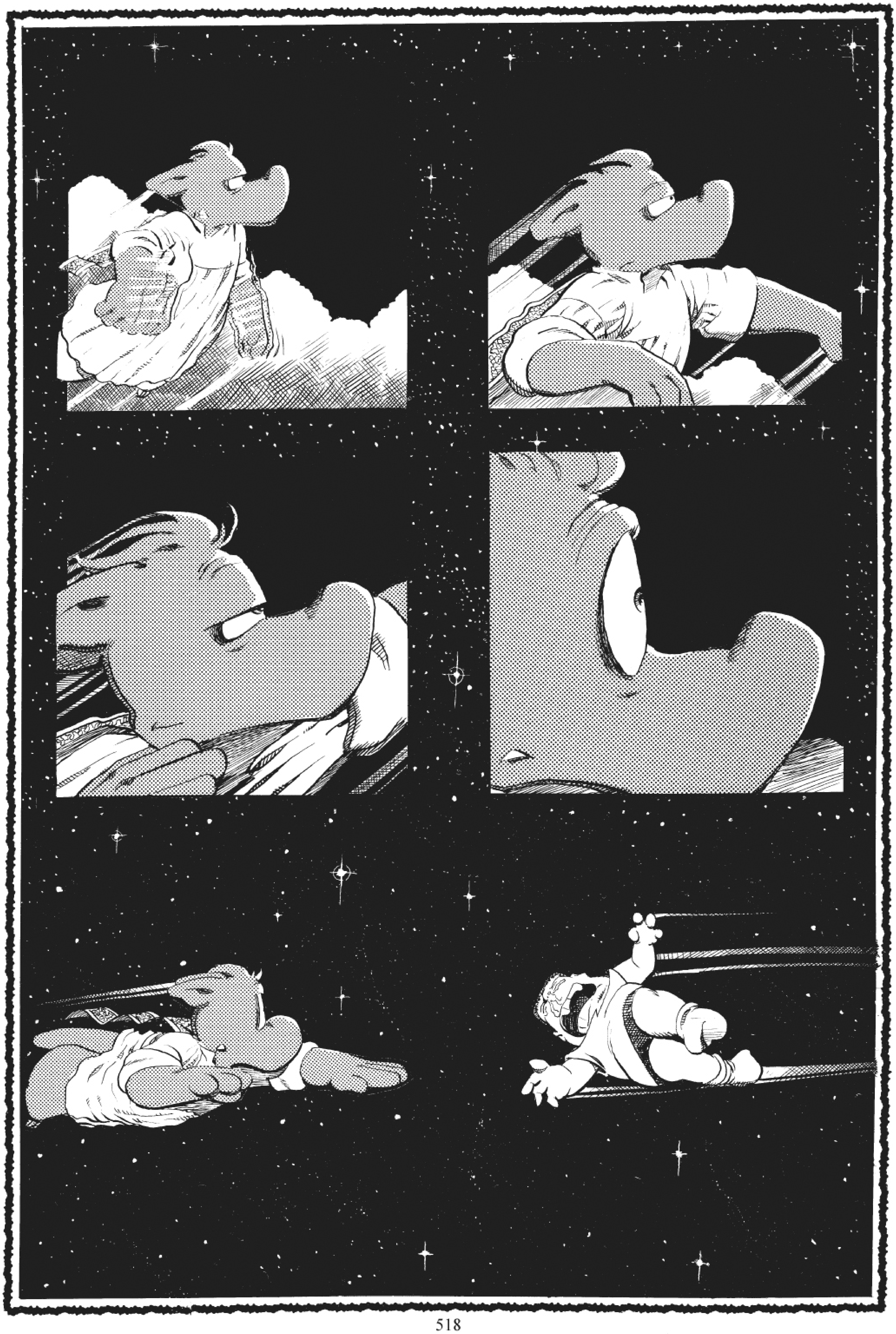


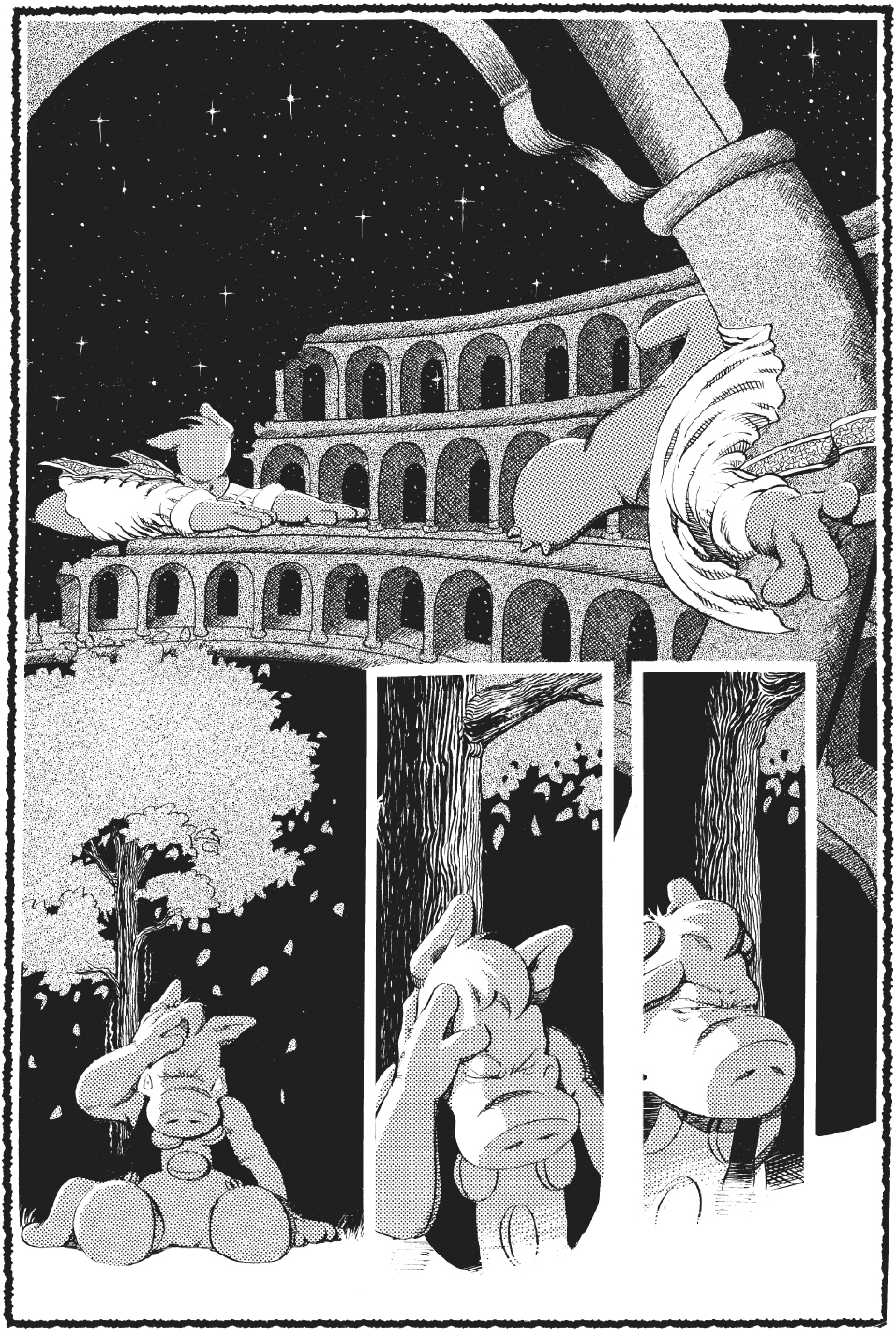


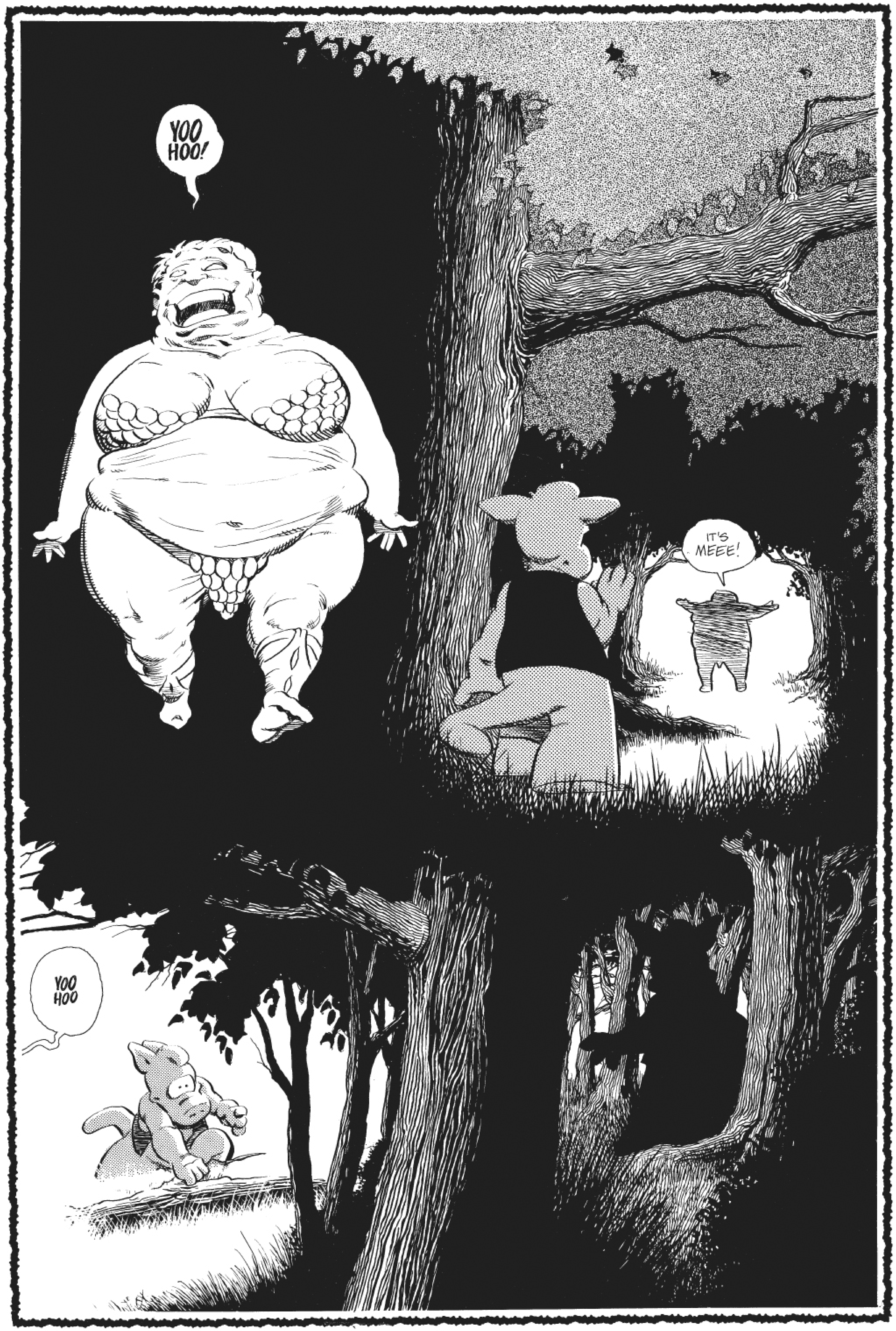

CEREBUS!

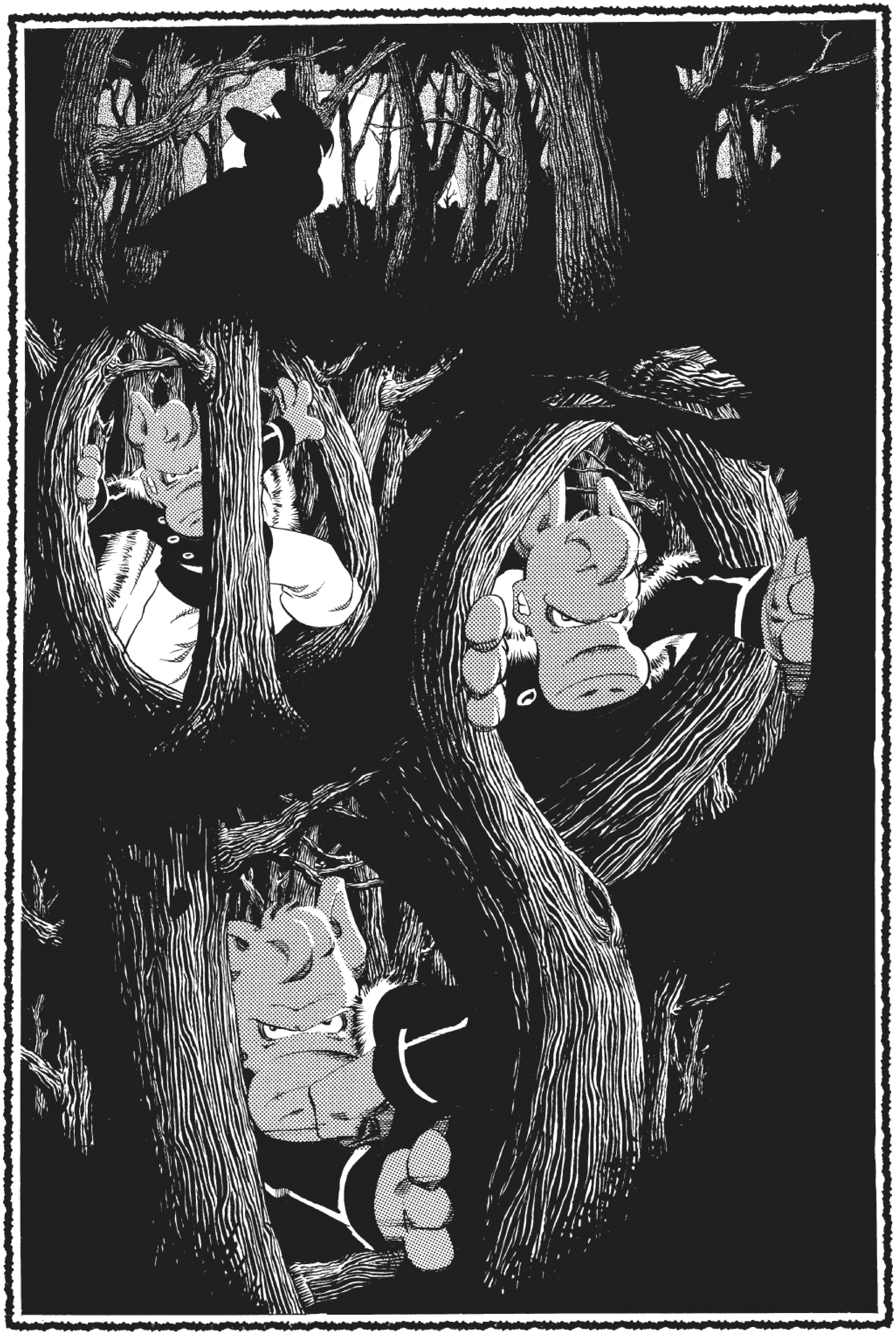

HOW MANY TIMES DO YOUR FATHER AND I HAVE TO TELL YOU...
NOBODY-WANTS-TO-LOOK-AT THOSE EARS
PUT Y'DAMN HAT ON...
CEREBUS!!
YOU COME BACK HERE THIS MINUTE
CEREBUS!!

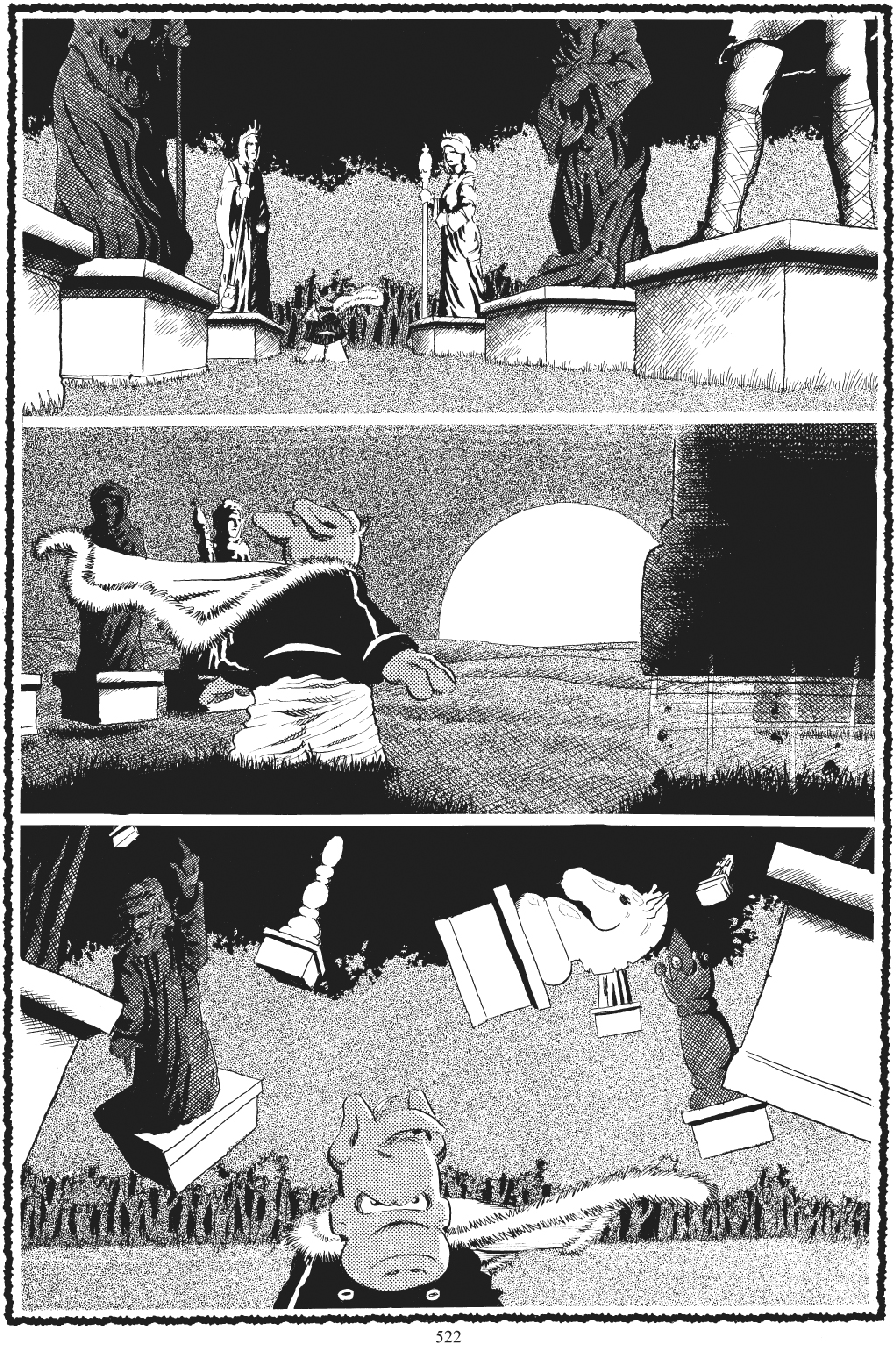


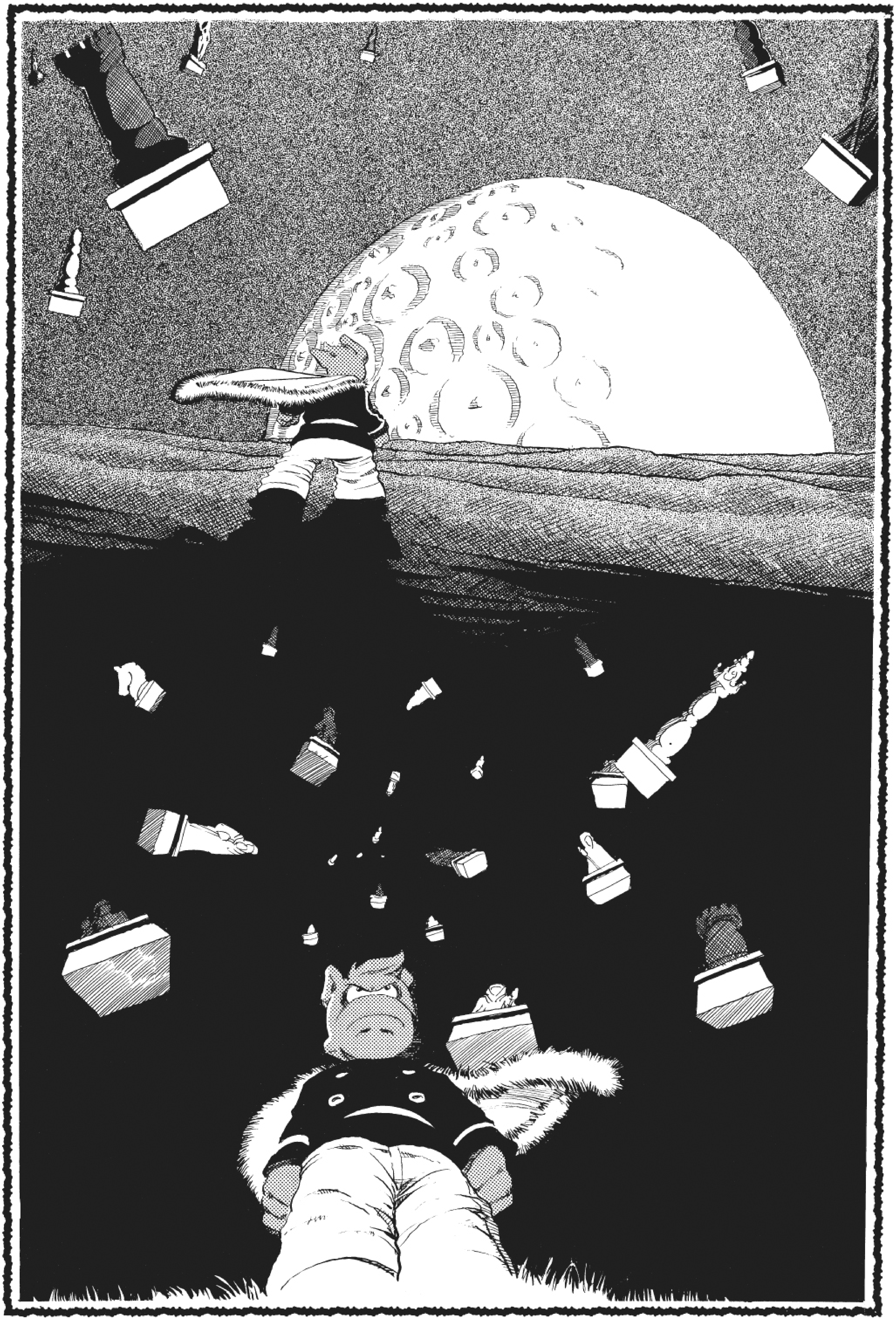


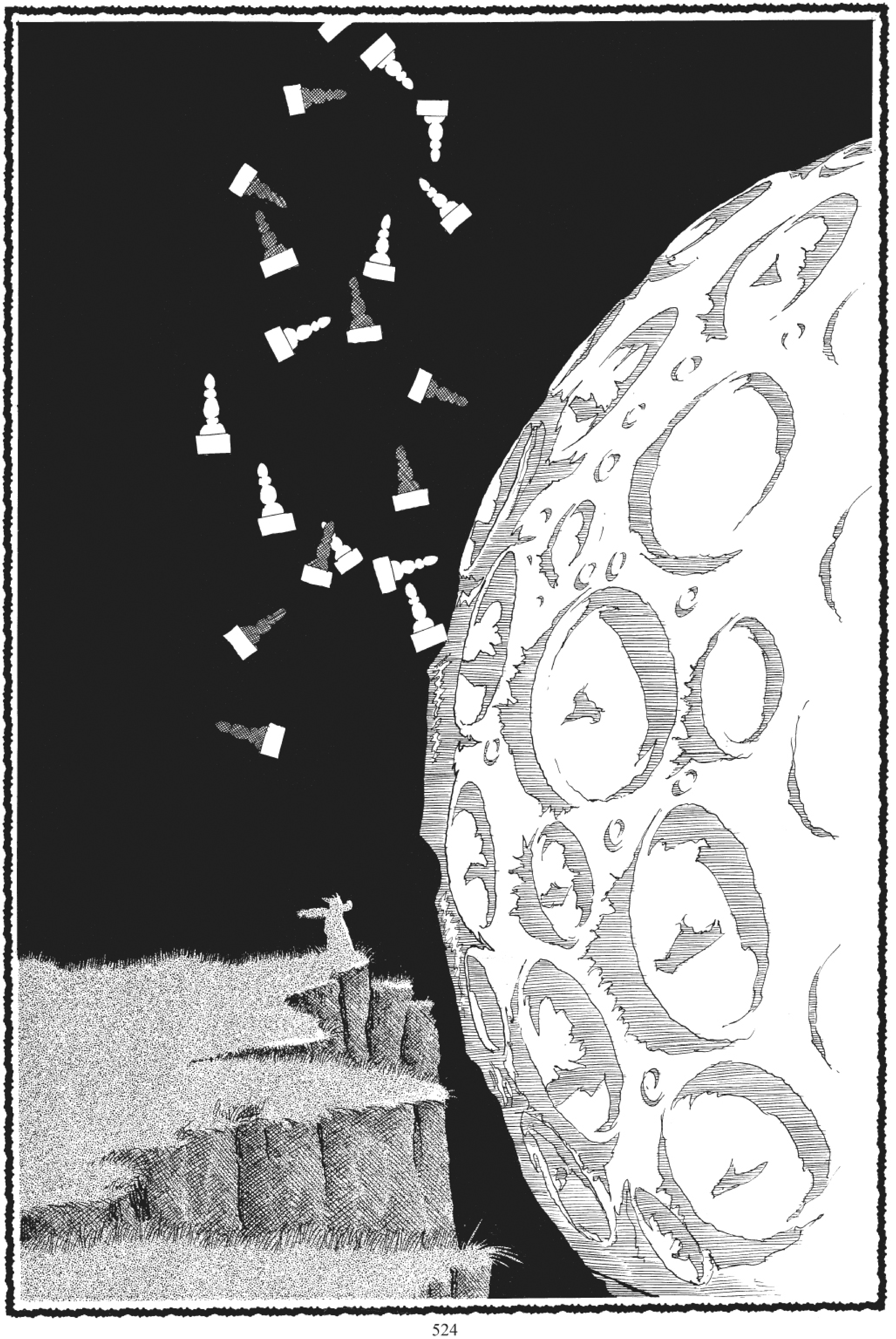


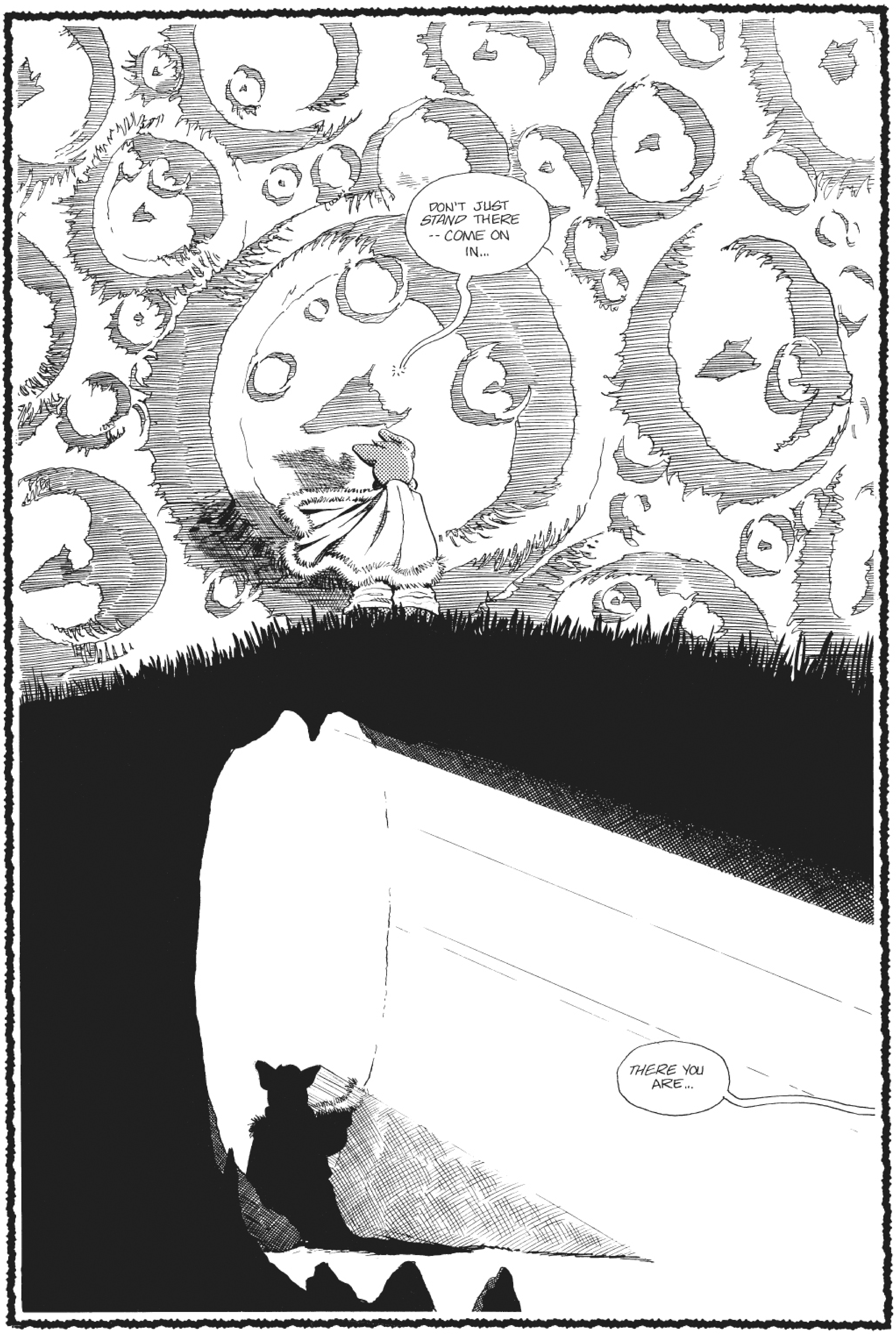

YOO HOO!
IT'S MEEE!
YOO HOO

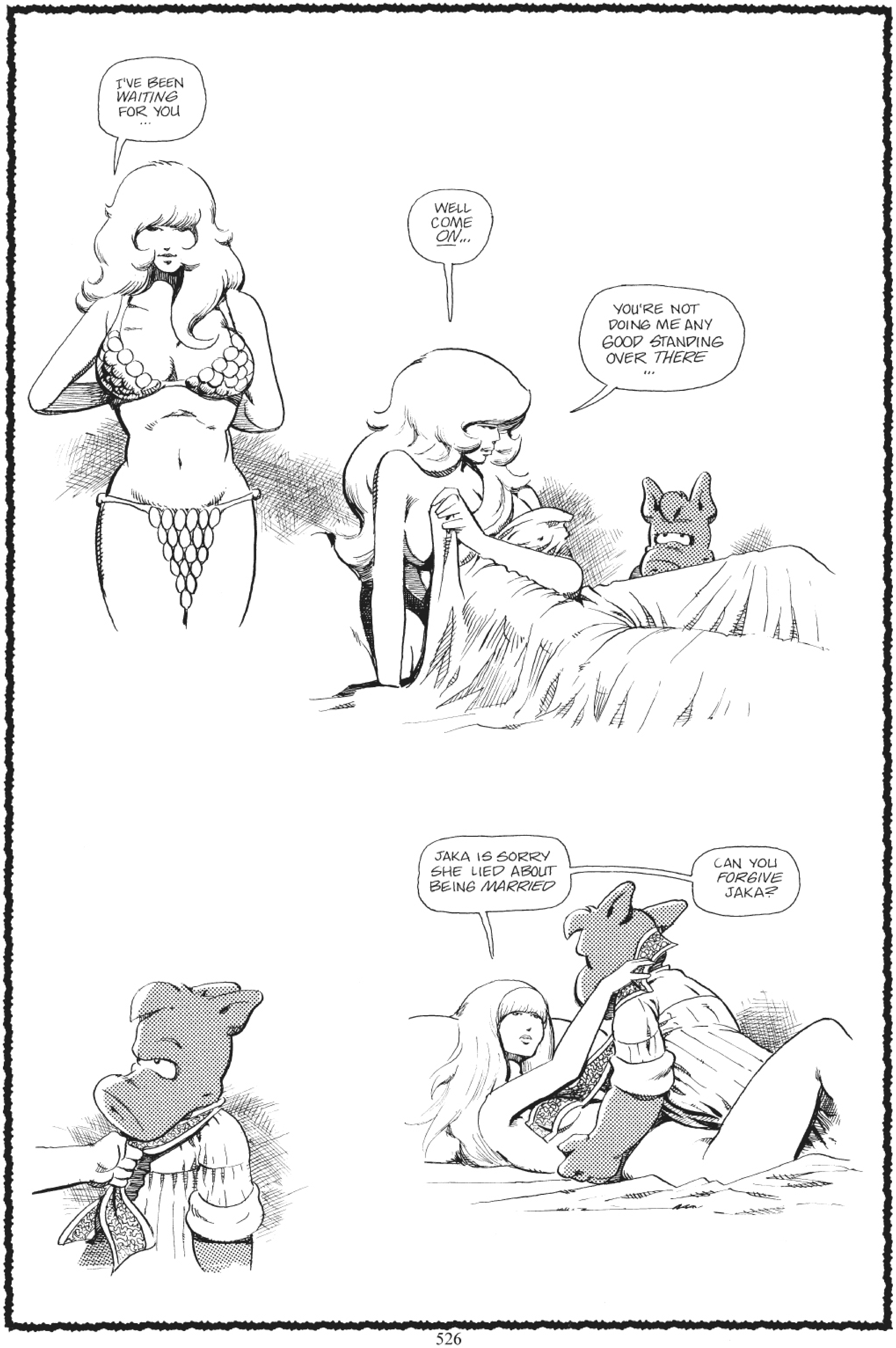


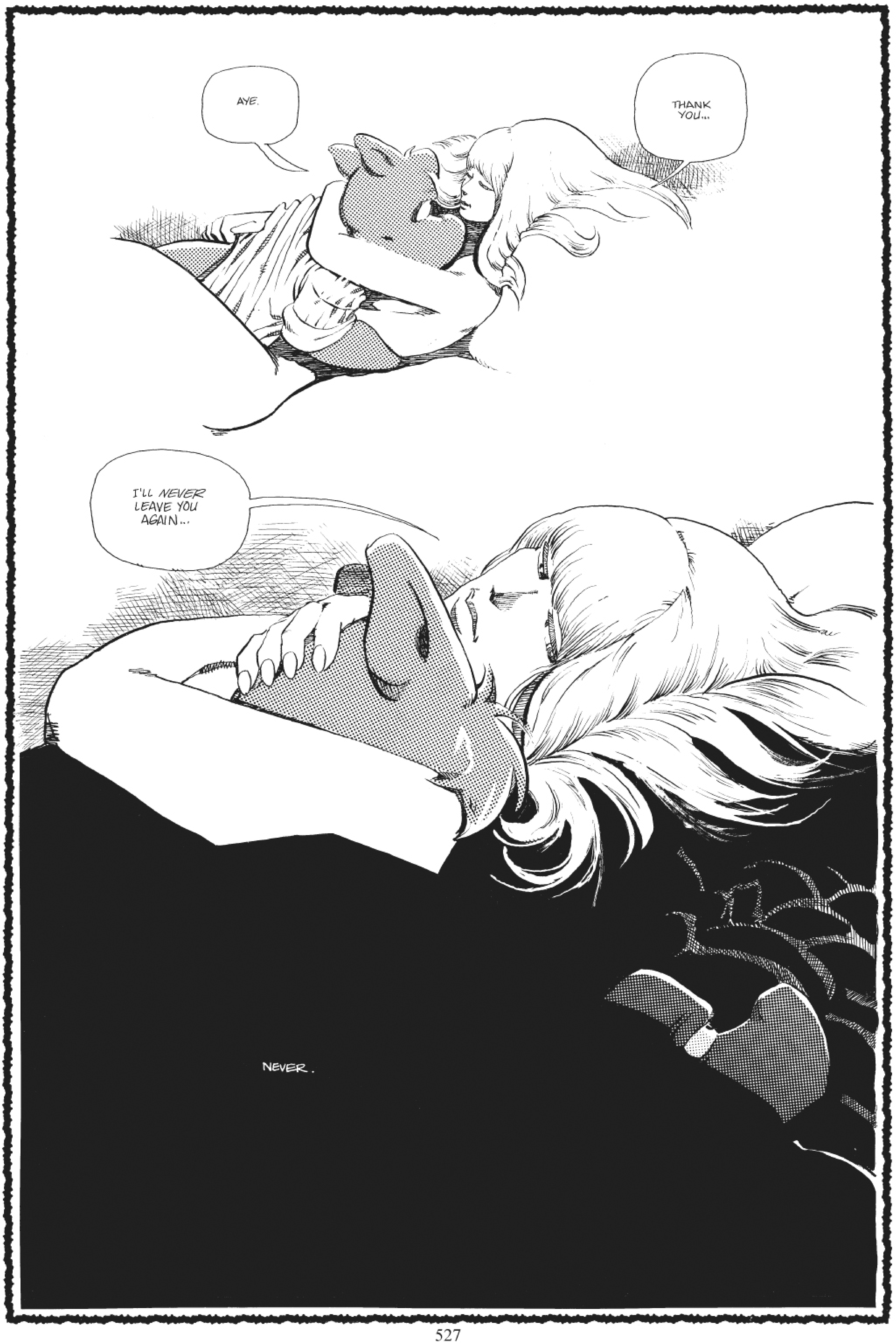


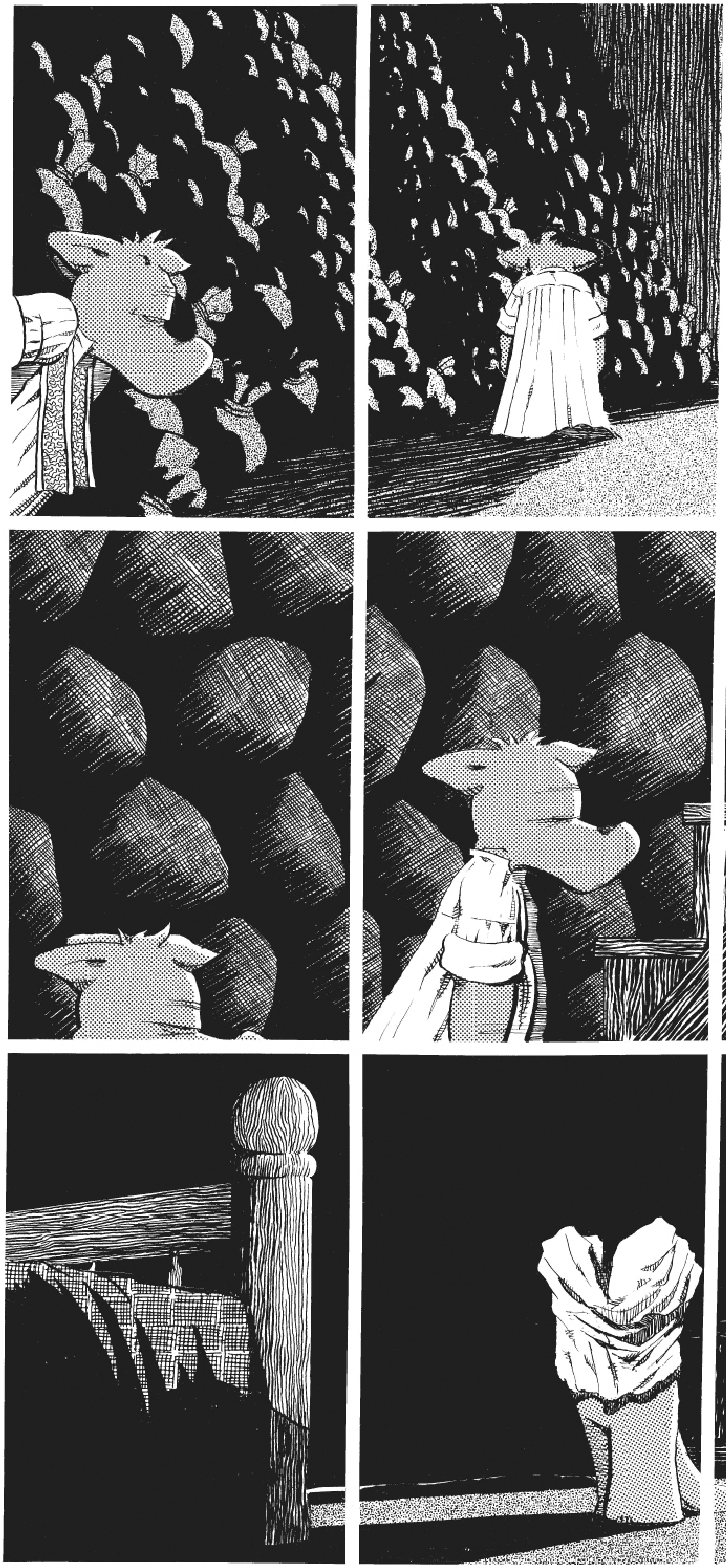


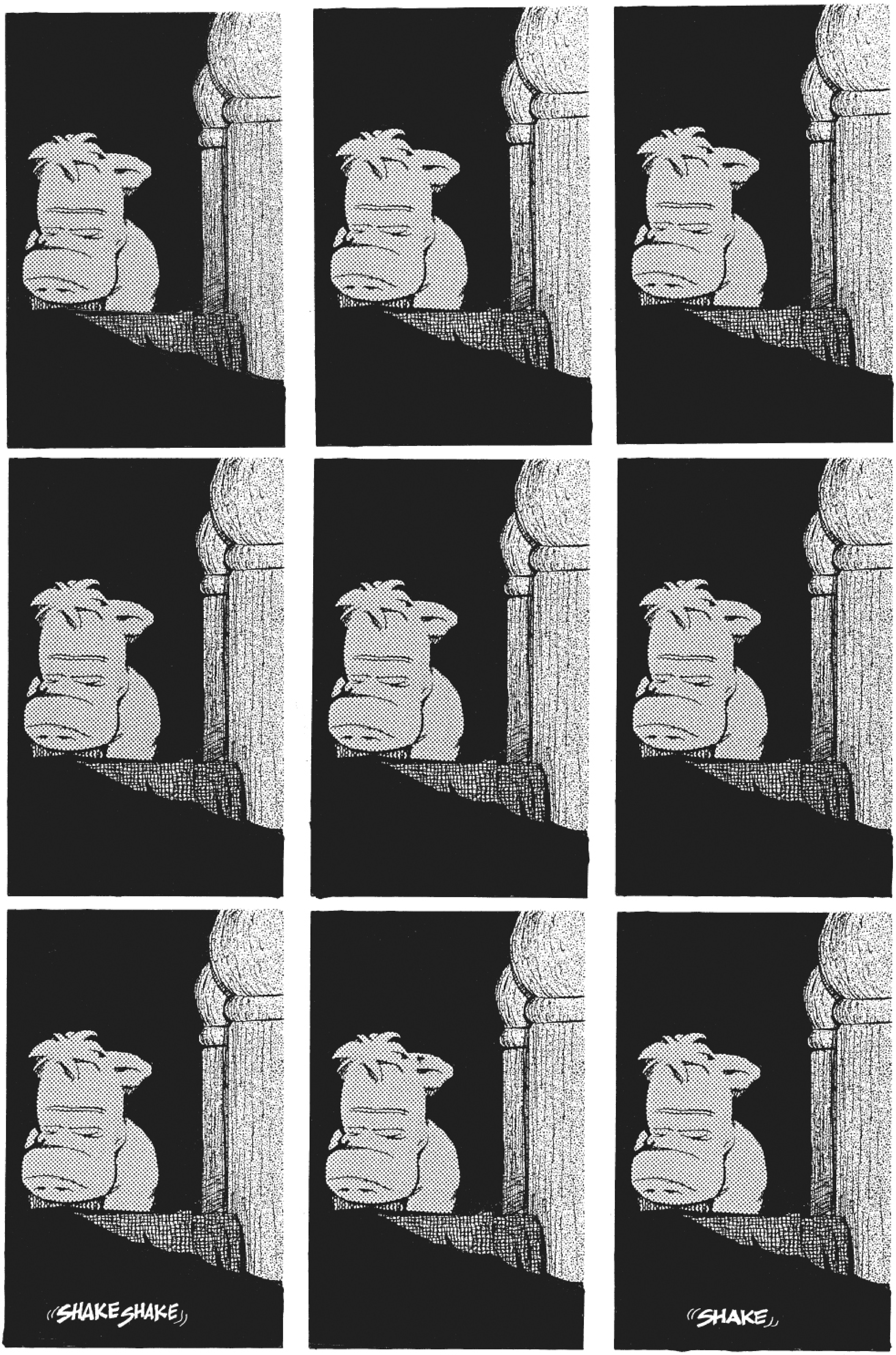


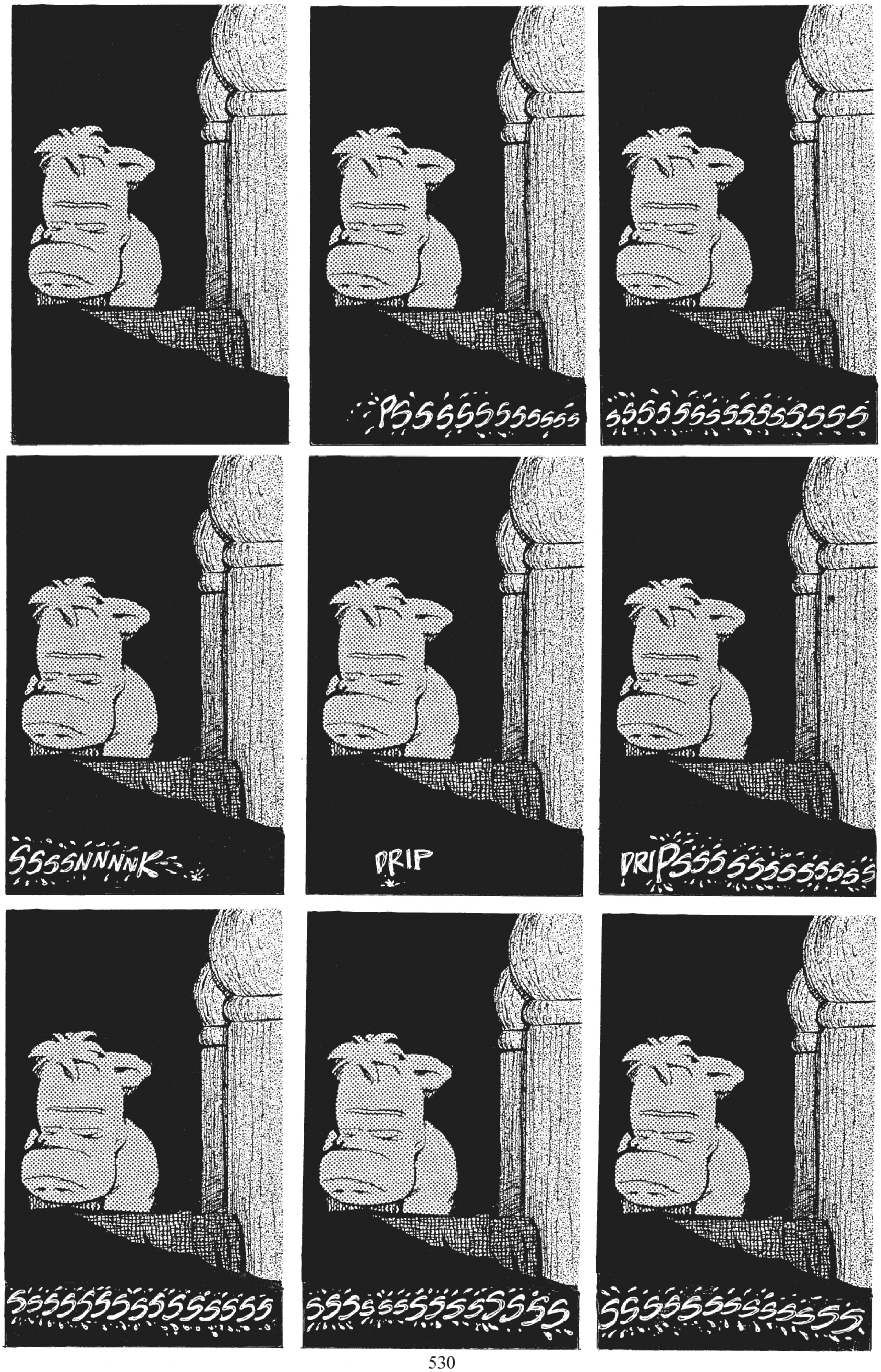

DON'T JUST *STAND* THERE -- COME ON IN...
THERE YOU ARE...


I'VE BEEN *WAITING* FOR YOU ...
WELL COME *ON*...
YOU'RE NOT DOING ME ANY GOOD STANDING OVER *THERE* ...
JAKA IS SORRY SHE LIED ABOUT BEING *MARRIED*
CAN YOU *FORGIVE* JAKA?


AYE.
THANK YOU...
I'LL NEVER LEAVE YOU AGAIN...
NEVER.




SHAKE SHAKE
SHAKE


PSSSSSSSSSSS
SSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSS
SSSSNNNNK
DRIP
DRIPSSSSSSSSSSSS
SSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSS
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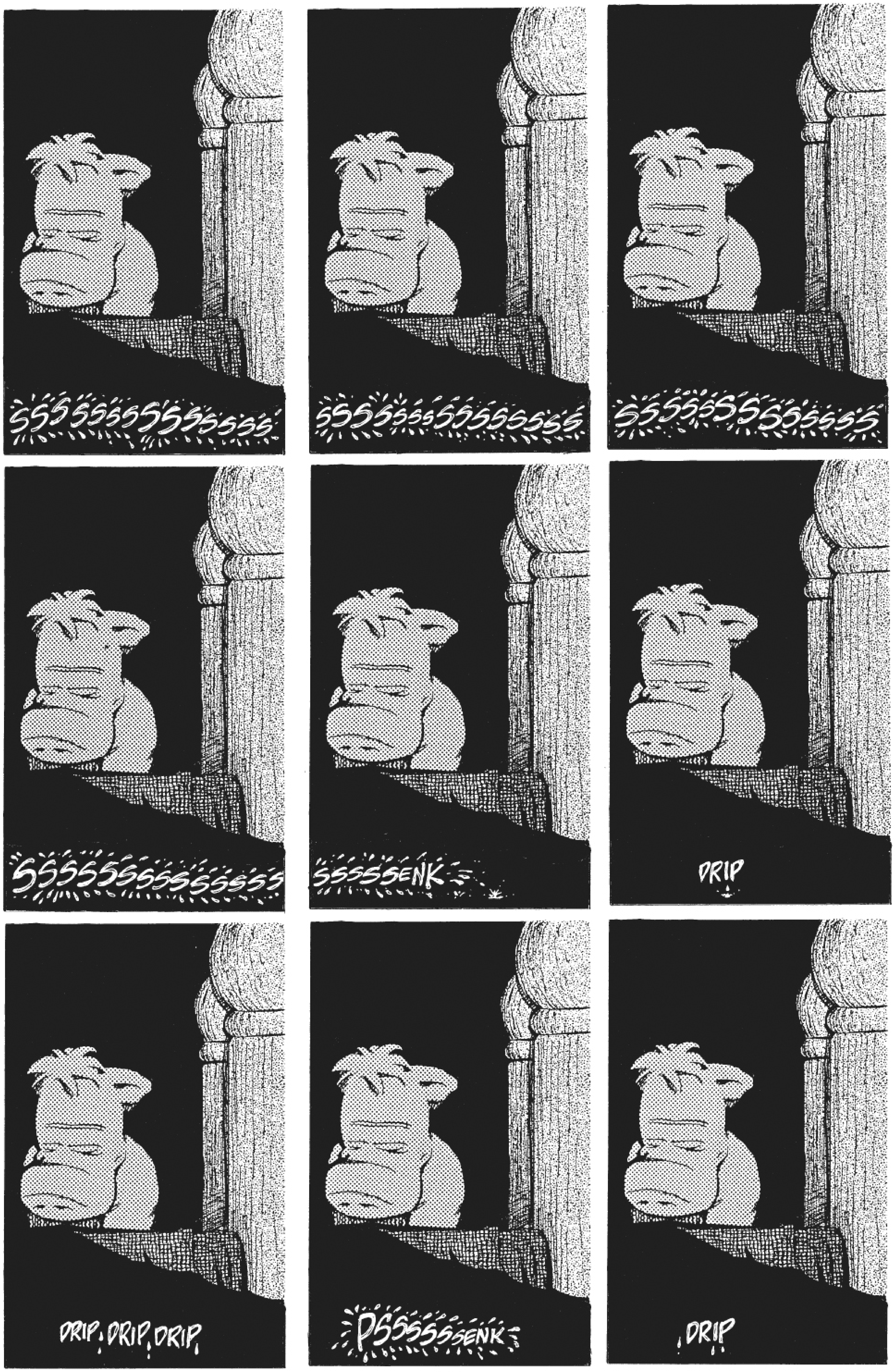
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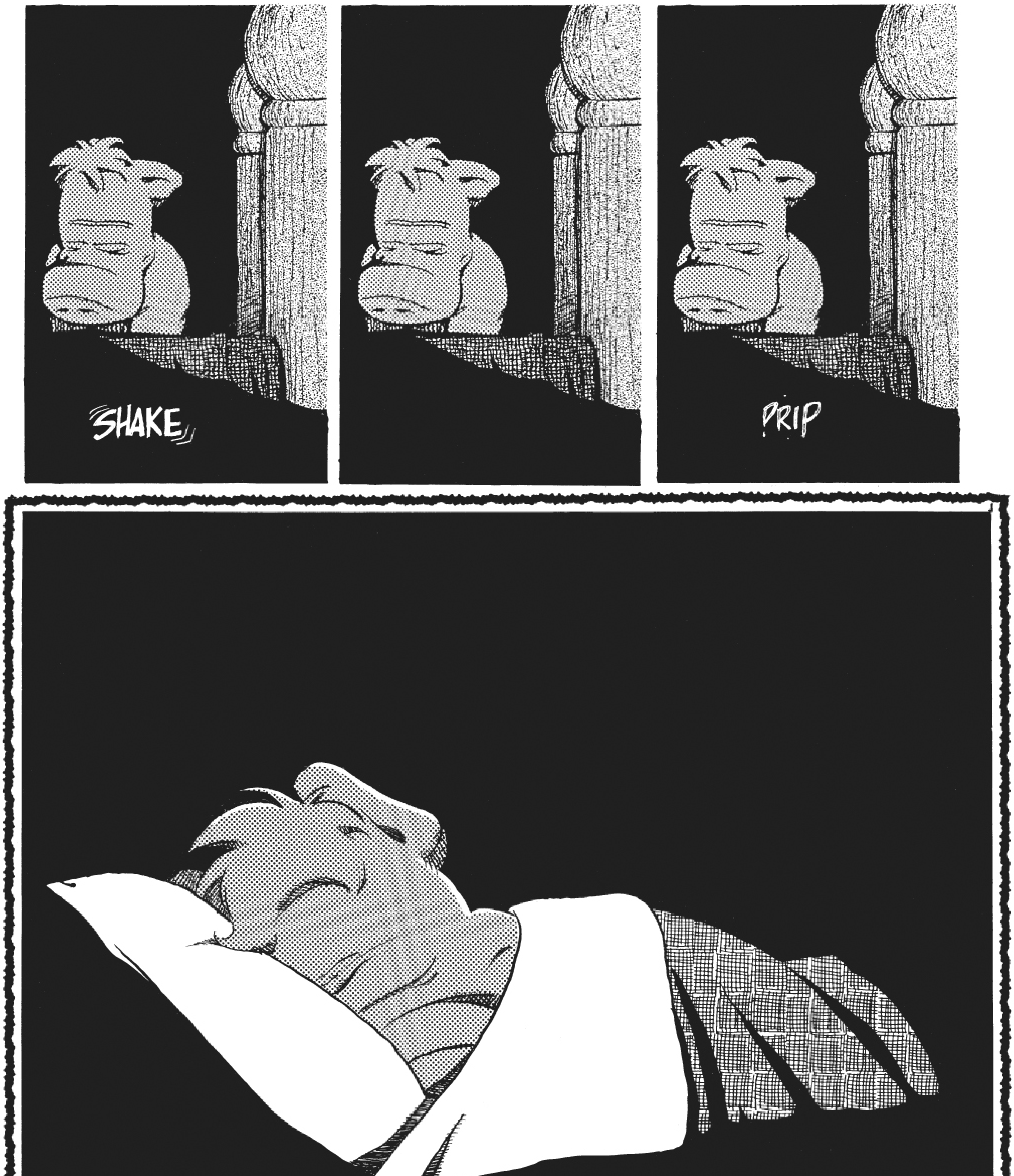
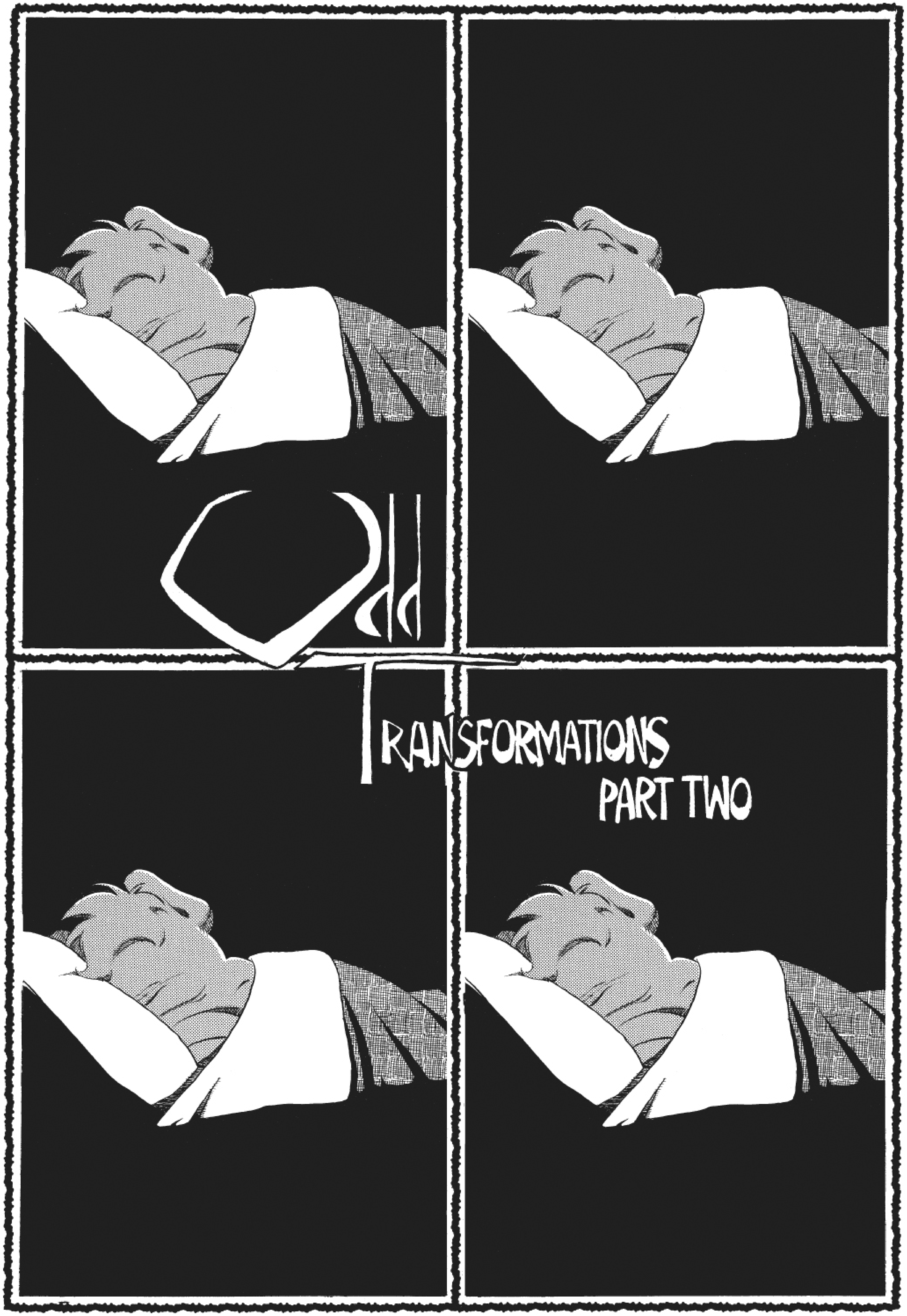
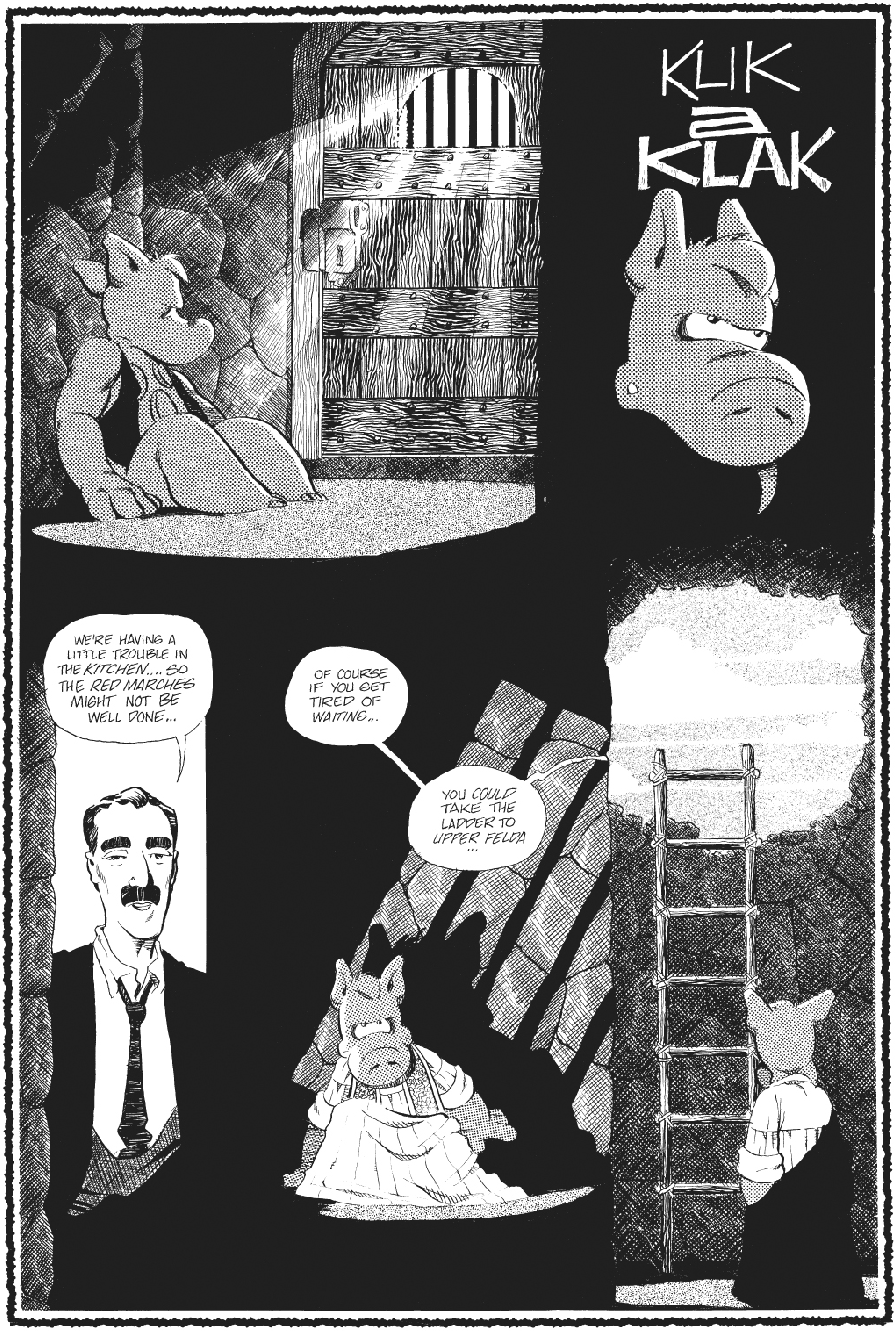
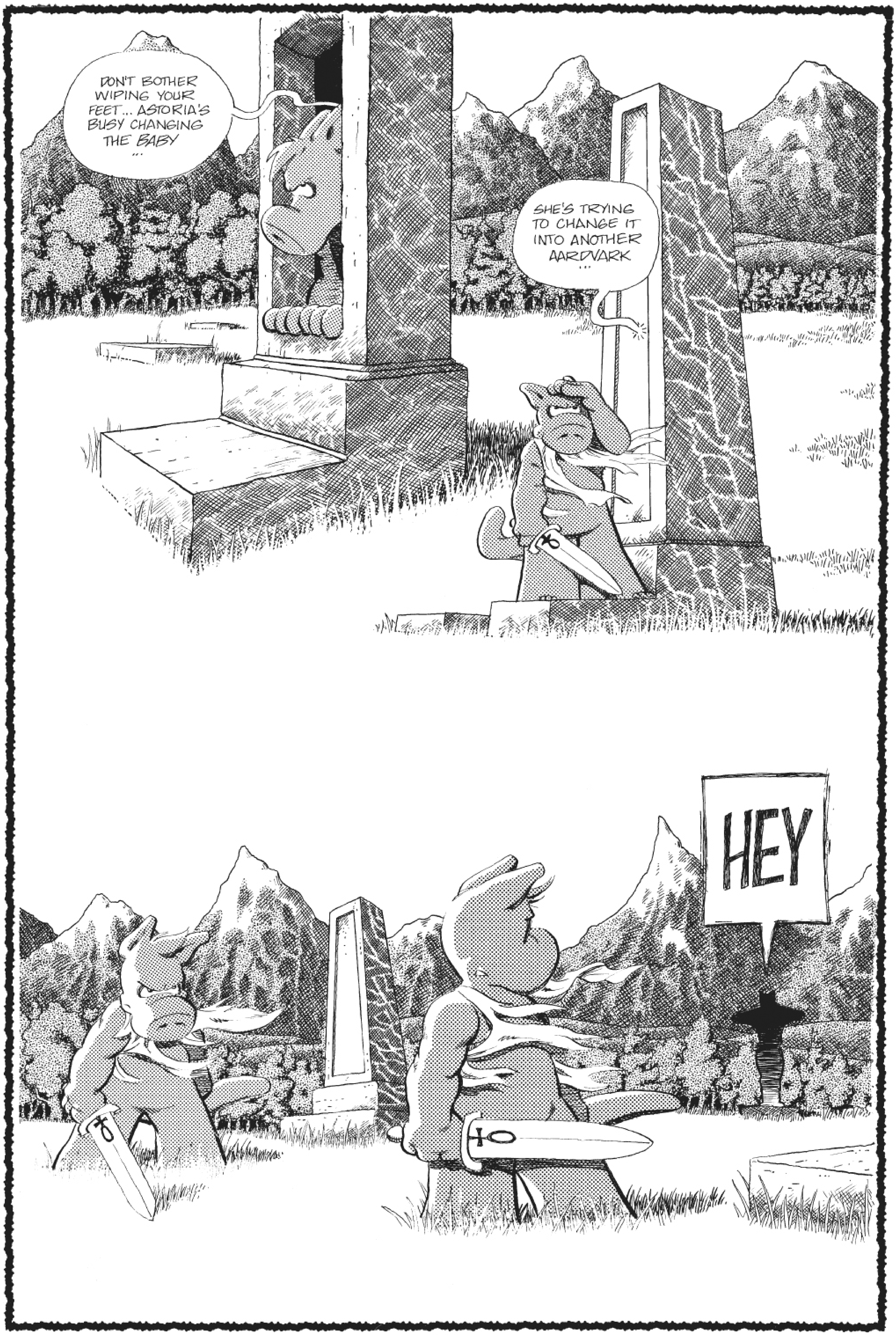
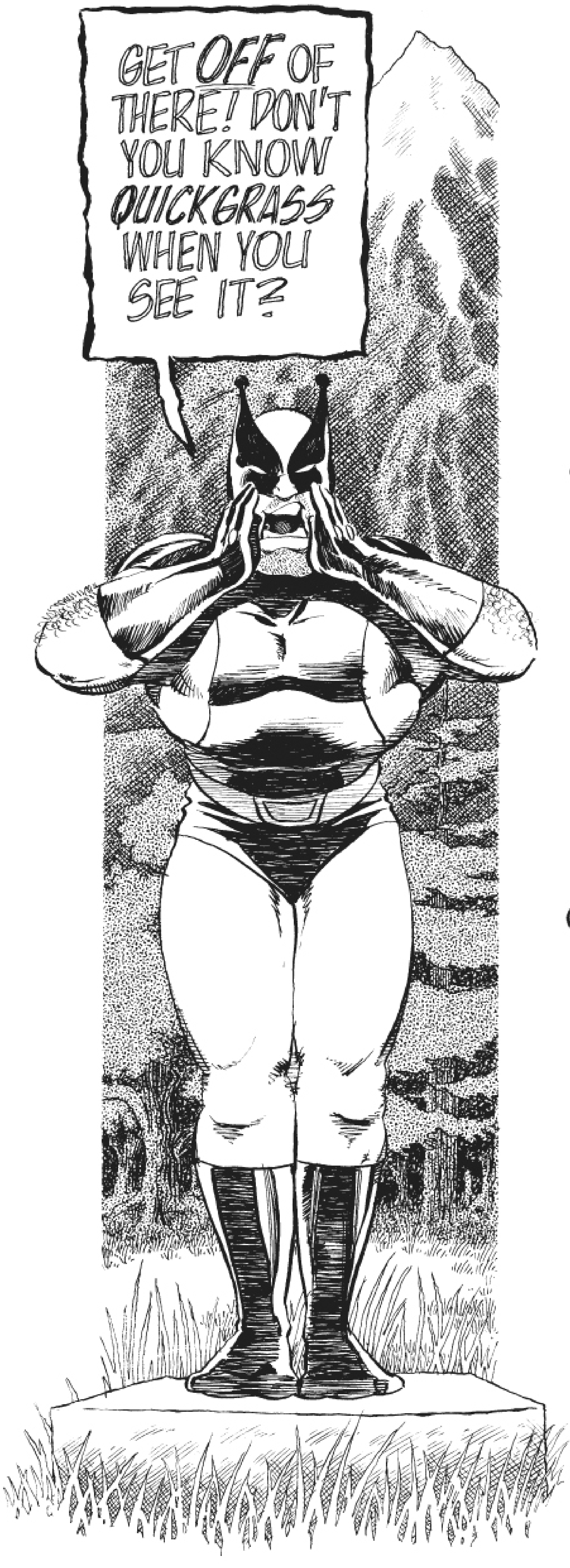
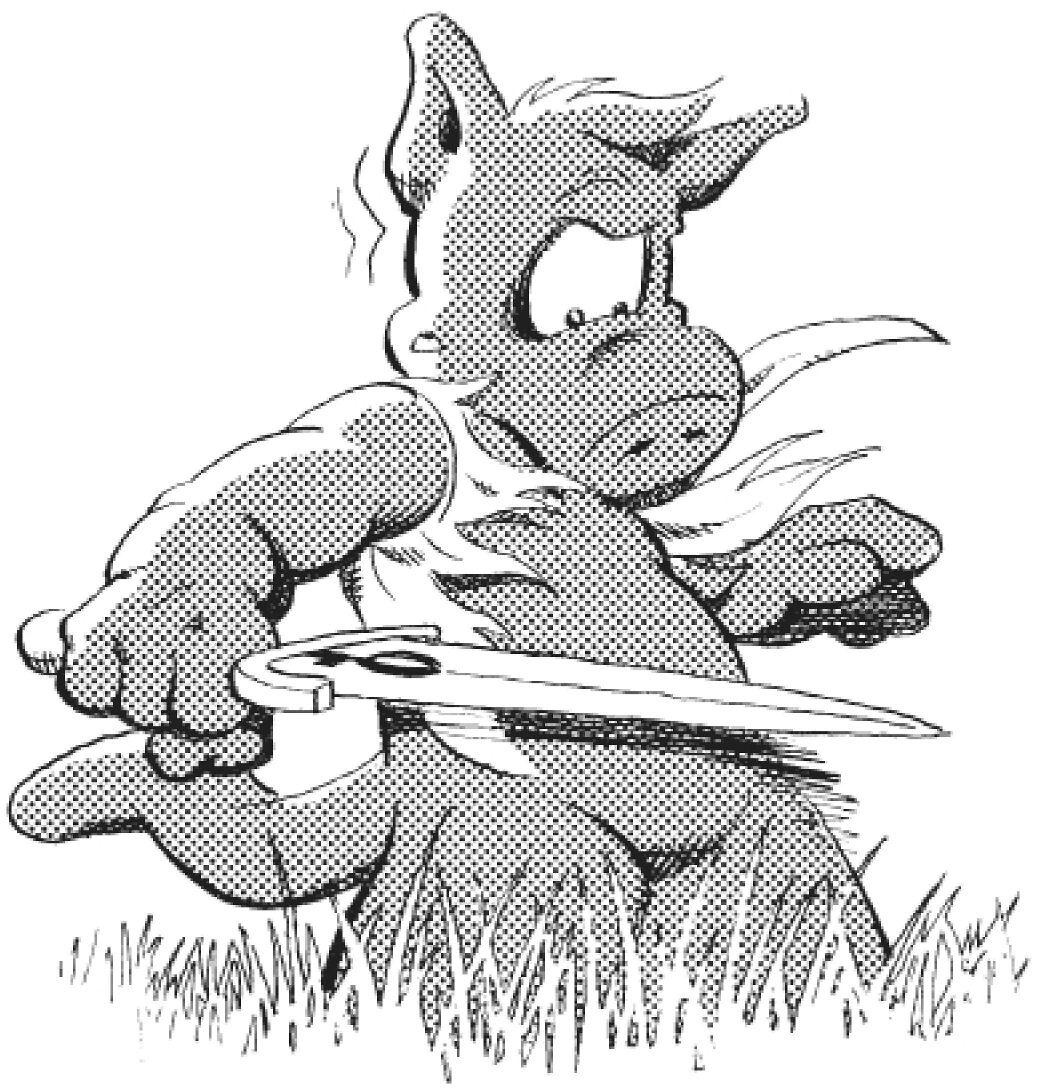

SHAKE
DRIP
NEXT: DREAMING ON AN EMPTY BLADDER

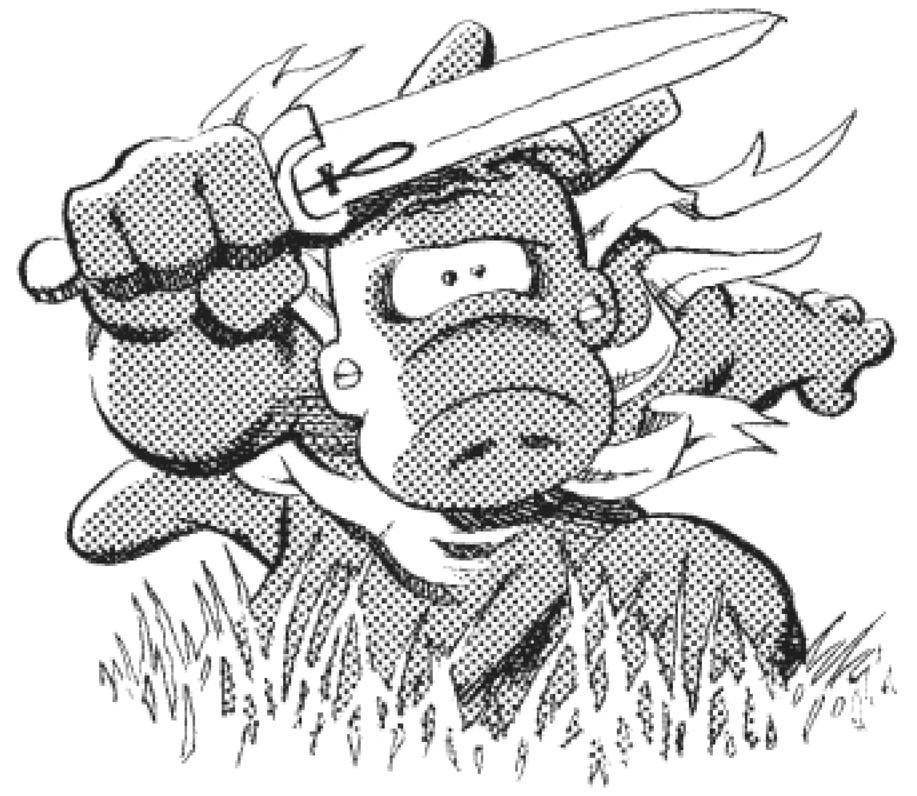

Odd
Transformations
PART TWO

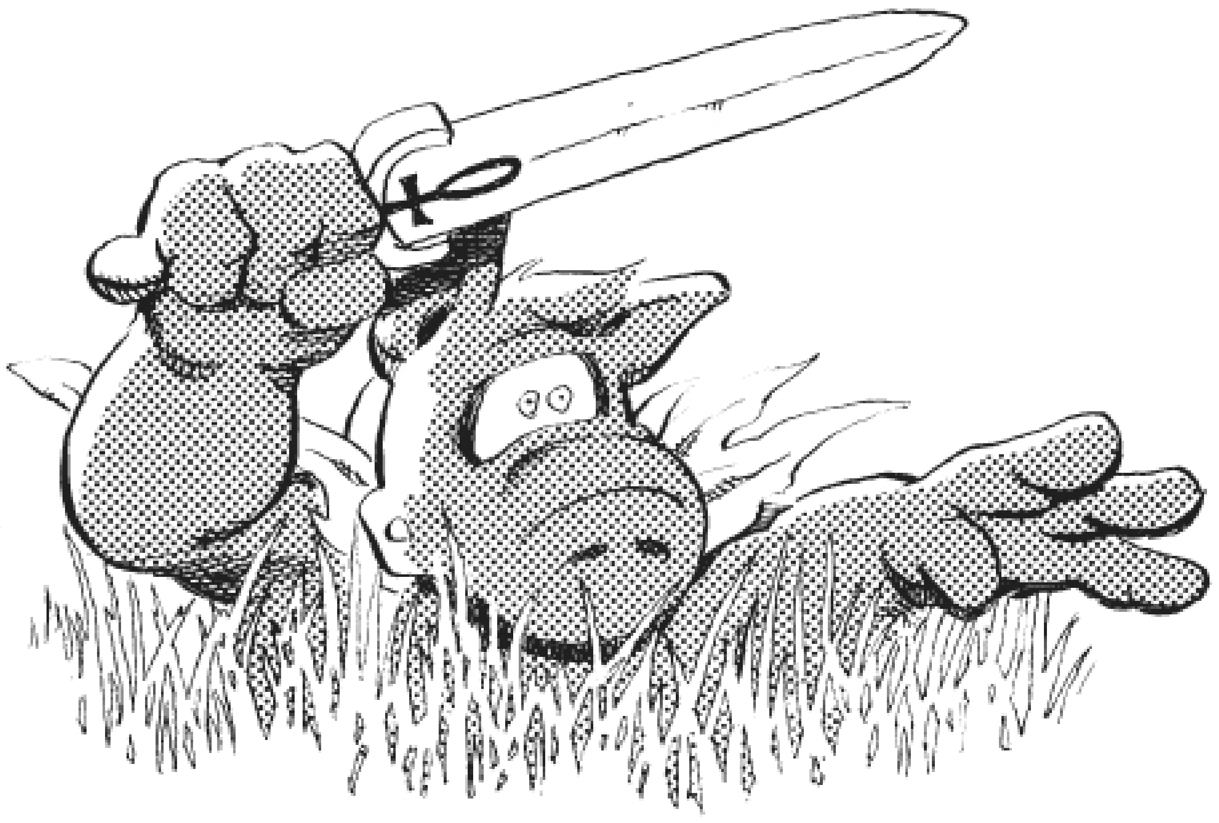

KLIK
a
KLAK
WE'RE HAVING A LITTLE TROUBLE IN THE *KITCHEN*.... SO THE *RED MARCHES* MIGHT NOT BE WELL DONE...
OF COURSE IF YOU GET TIRED OF WAITING...
YOU *COULD* TAKE THE LADDER TO UPPER FELDA ...

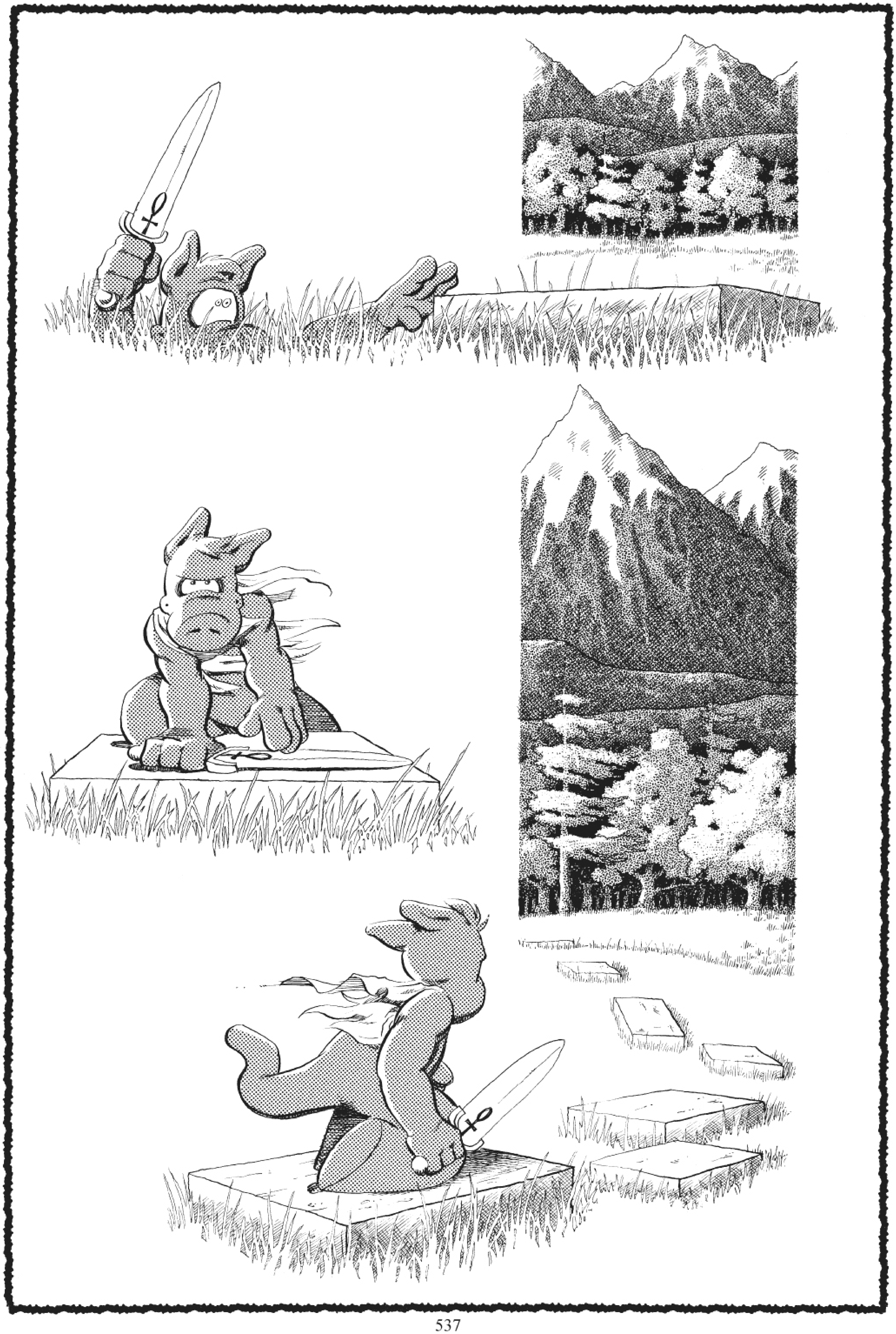

DON'T BOTHER WIPING YOUR FEET... ASTORIA'S BUSY CHANGING THE *BABY* ...
SHE'S TRYING TO CHANGE IT INTO ANOTHER AARDVARK ...
HEY

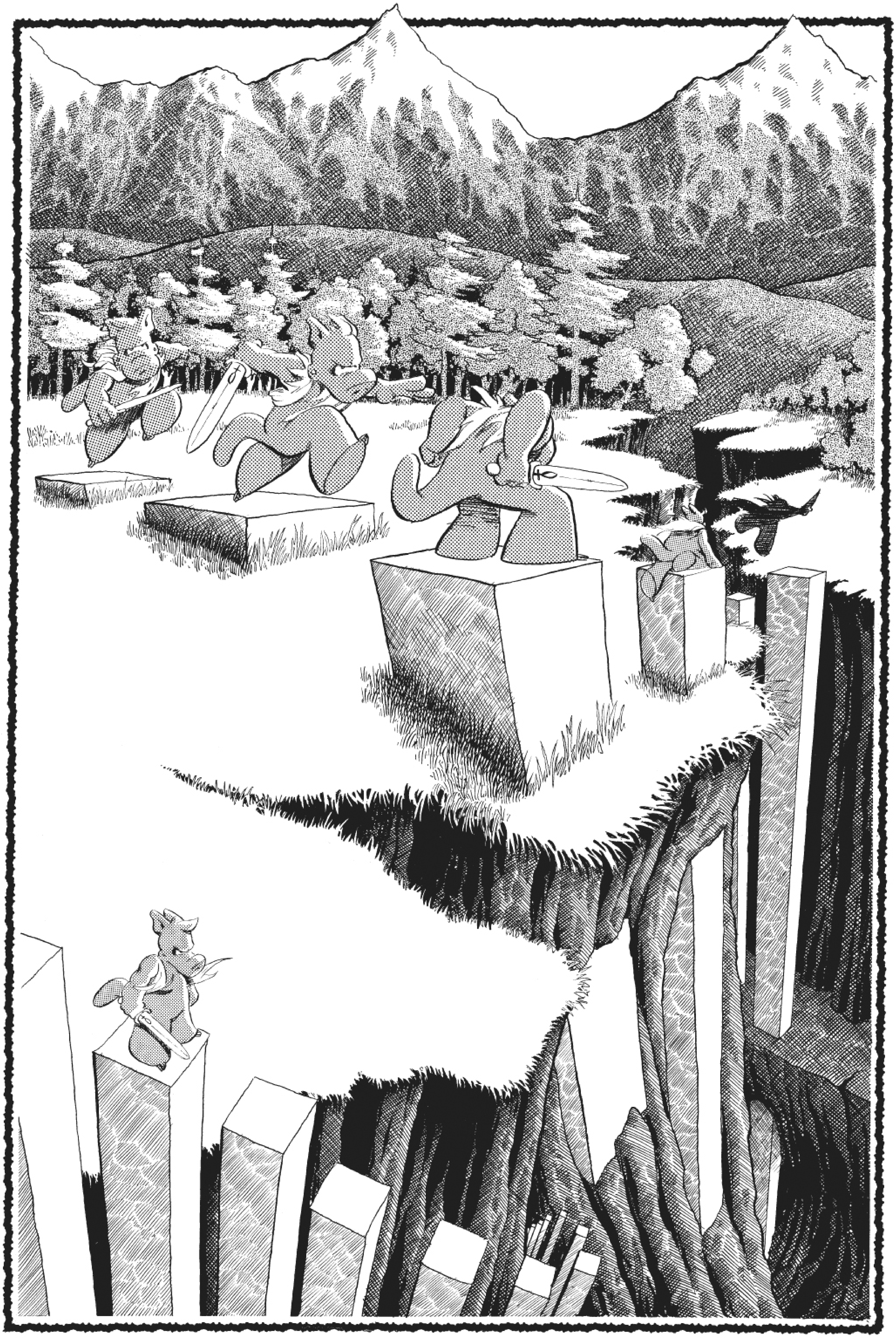

GET OFF OF THERE! DON'T YOU KNOW QUICKGRASS WHEN YOU SEE IT?

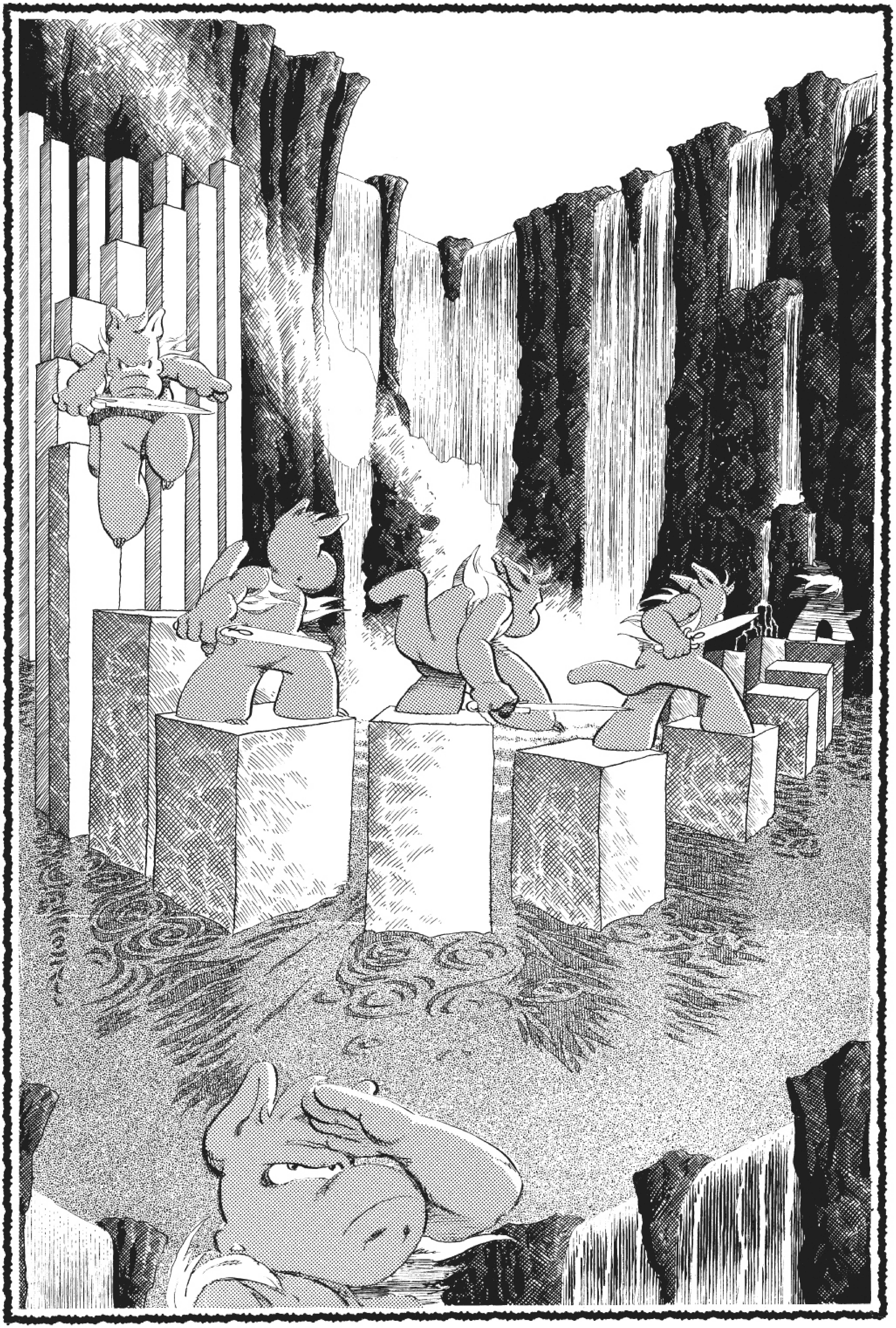


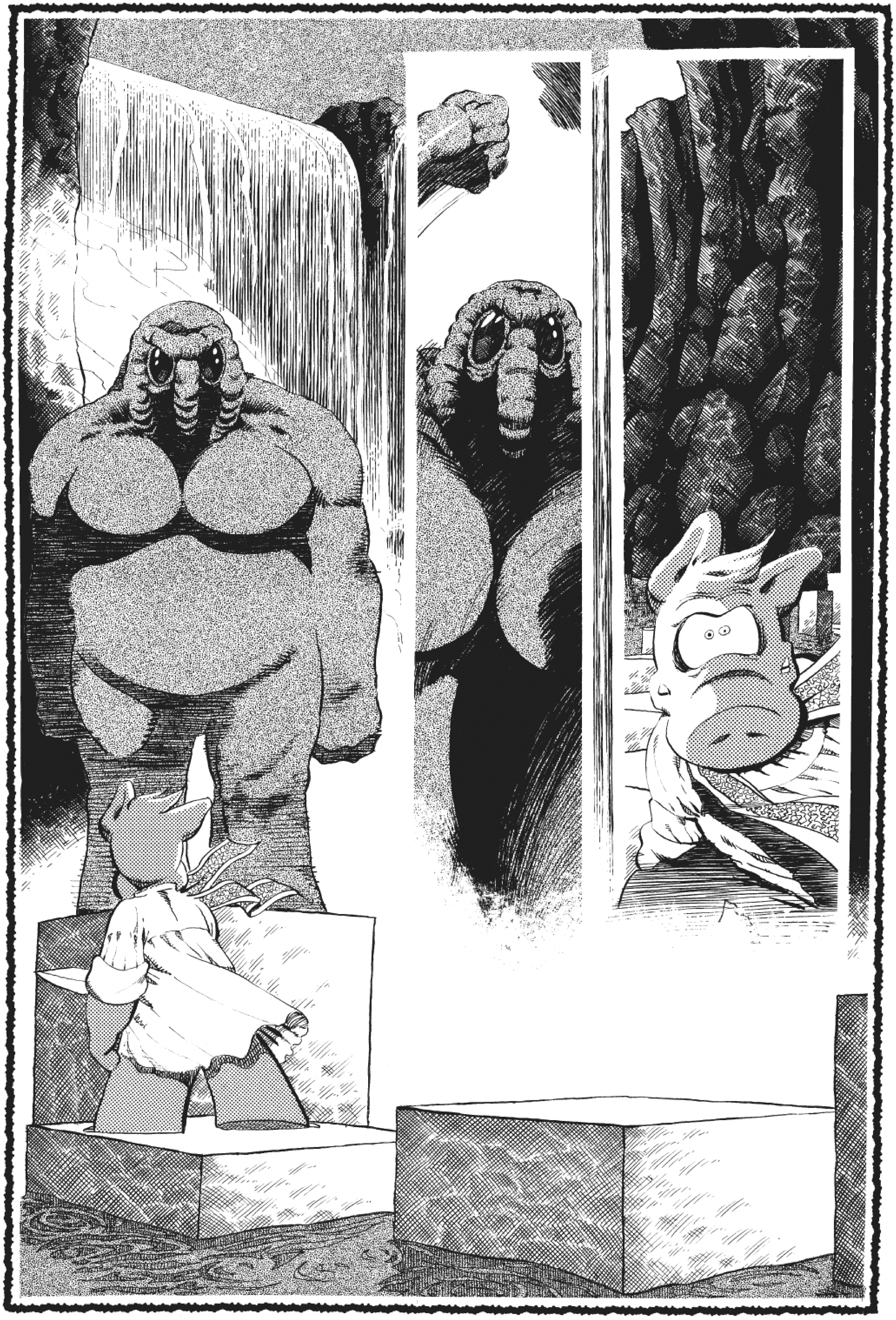


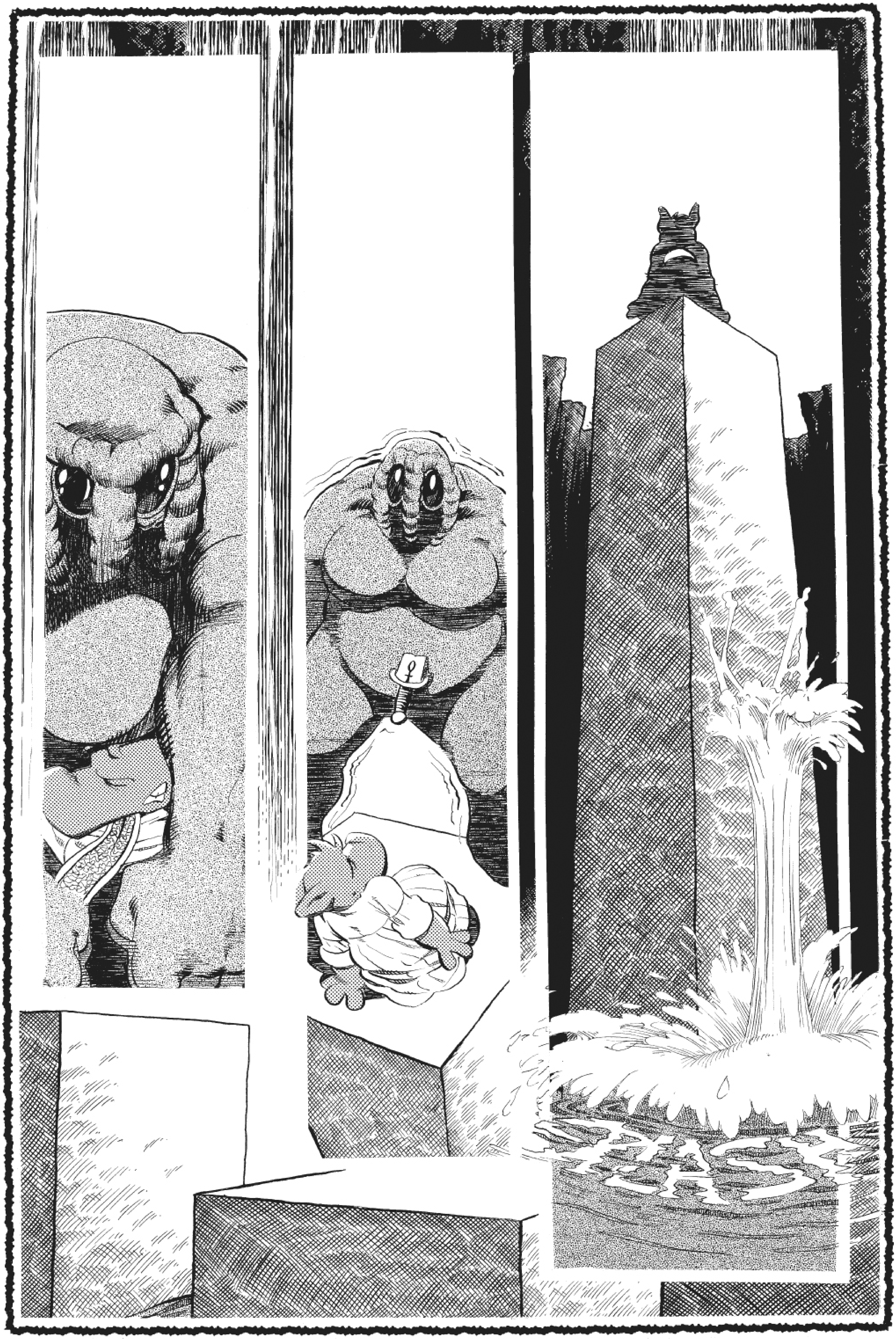


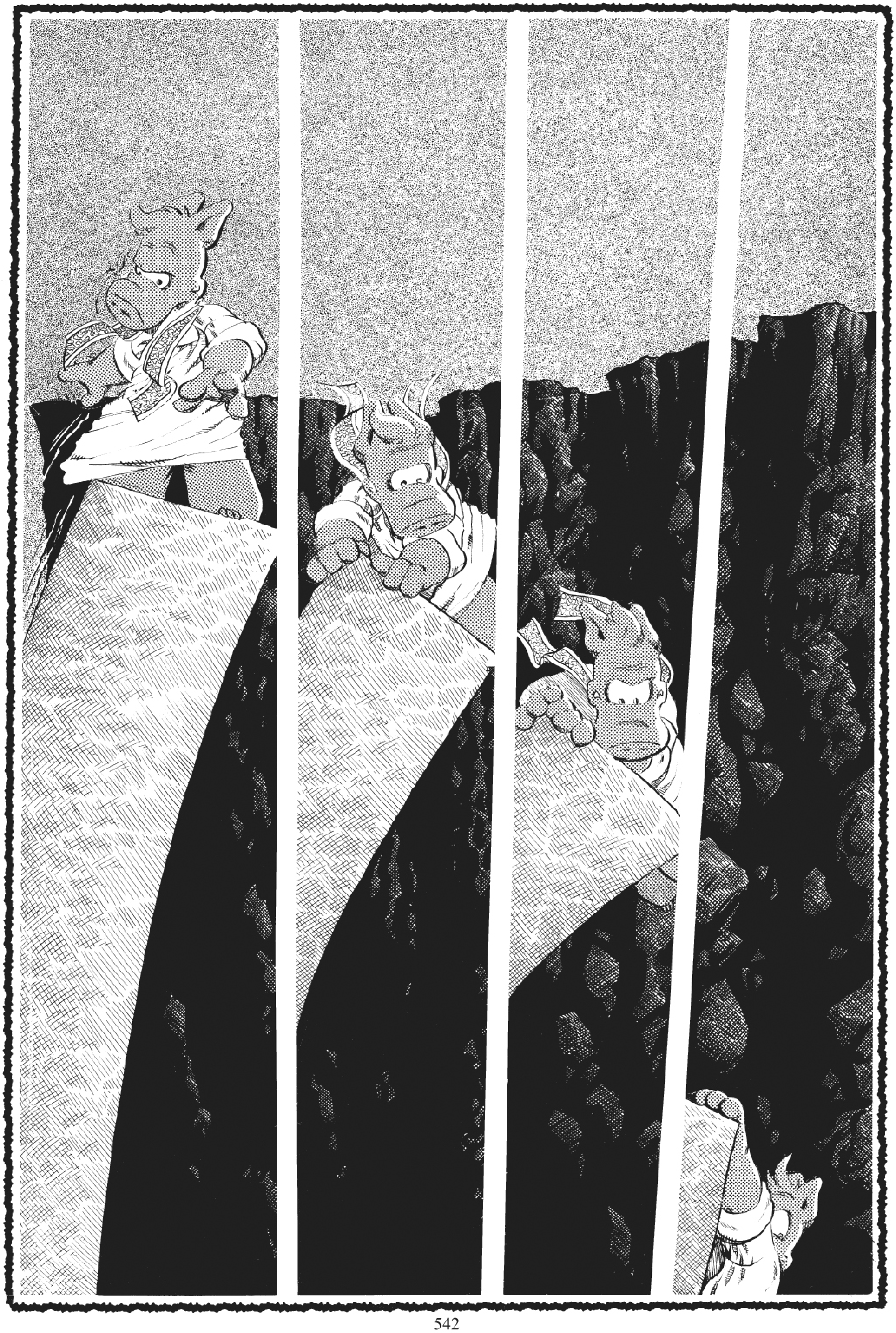


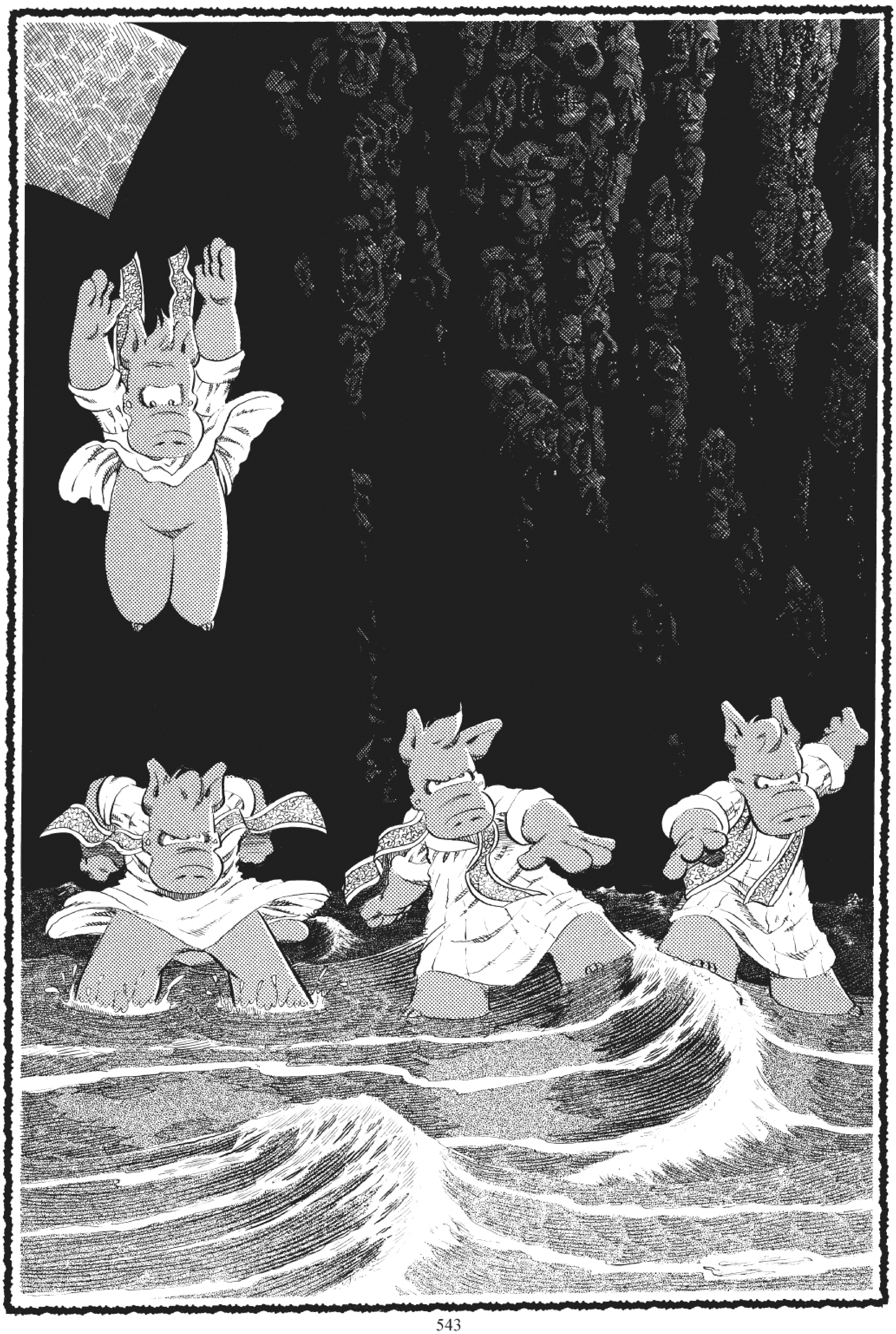


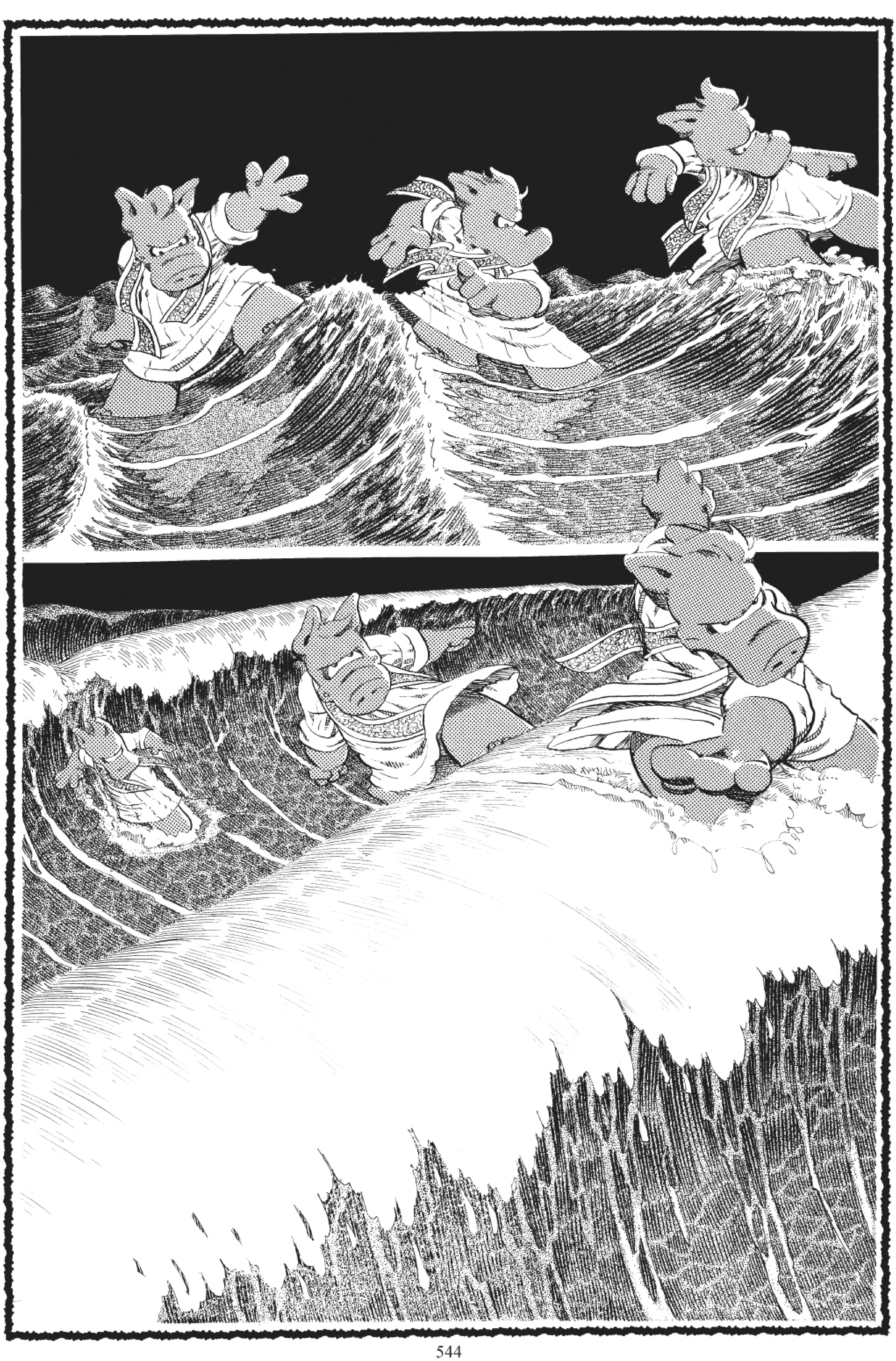


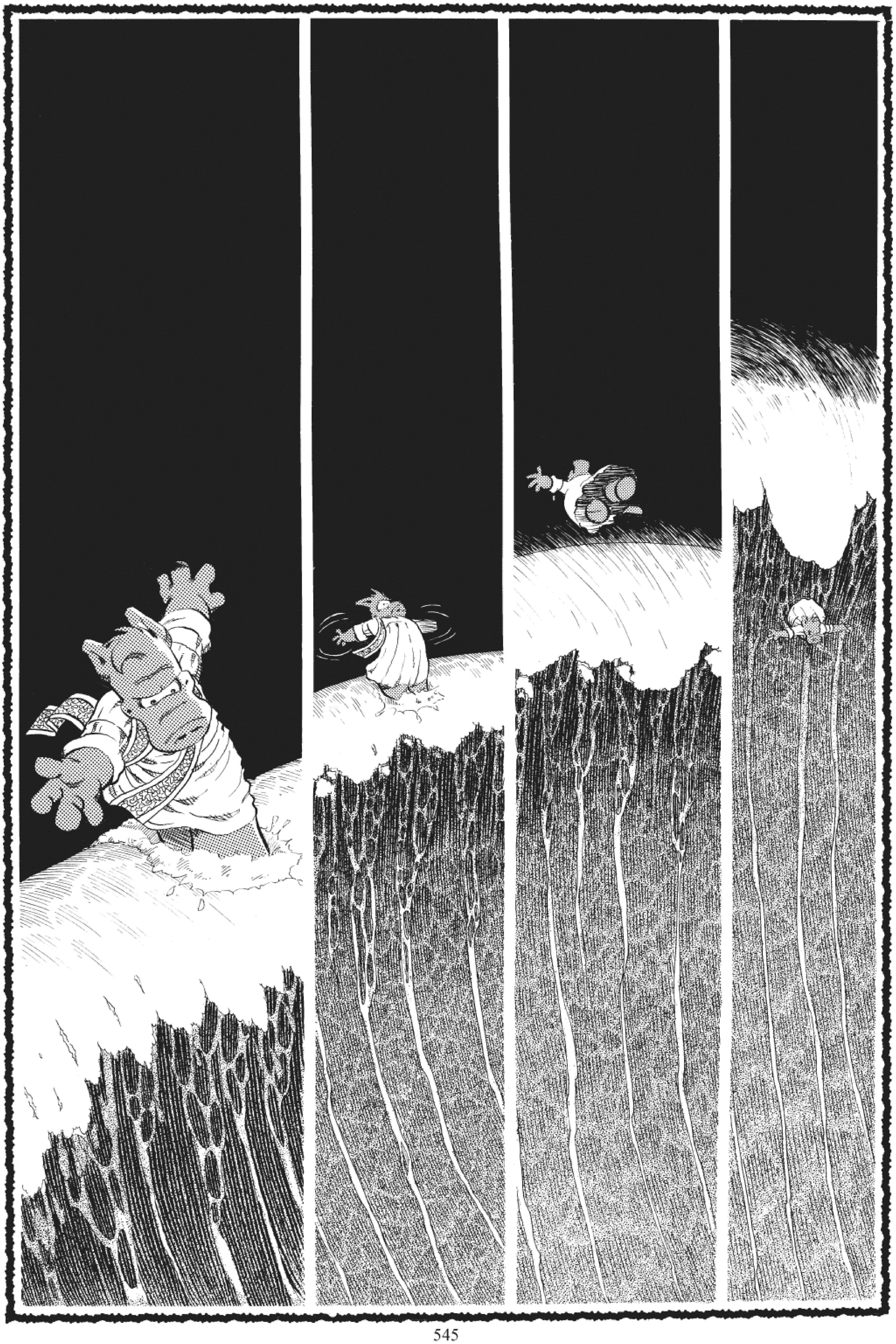


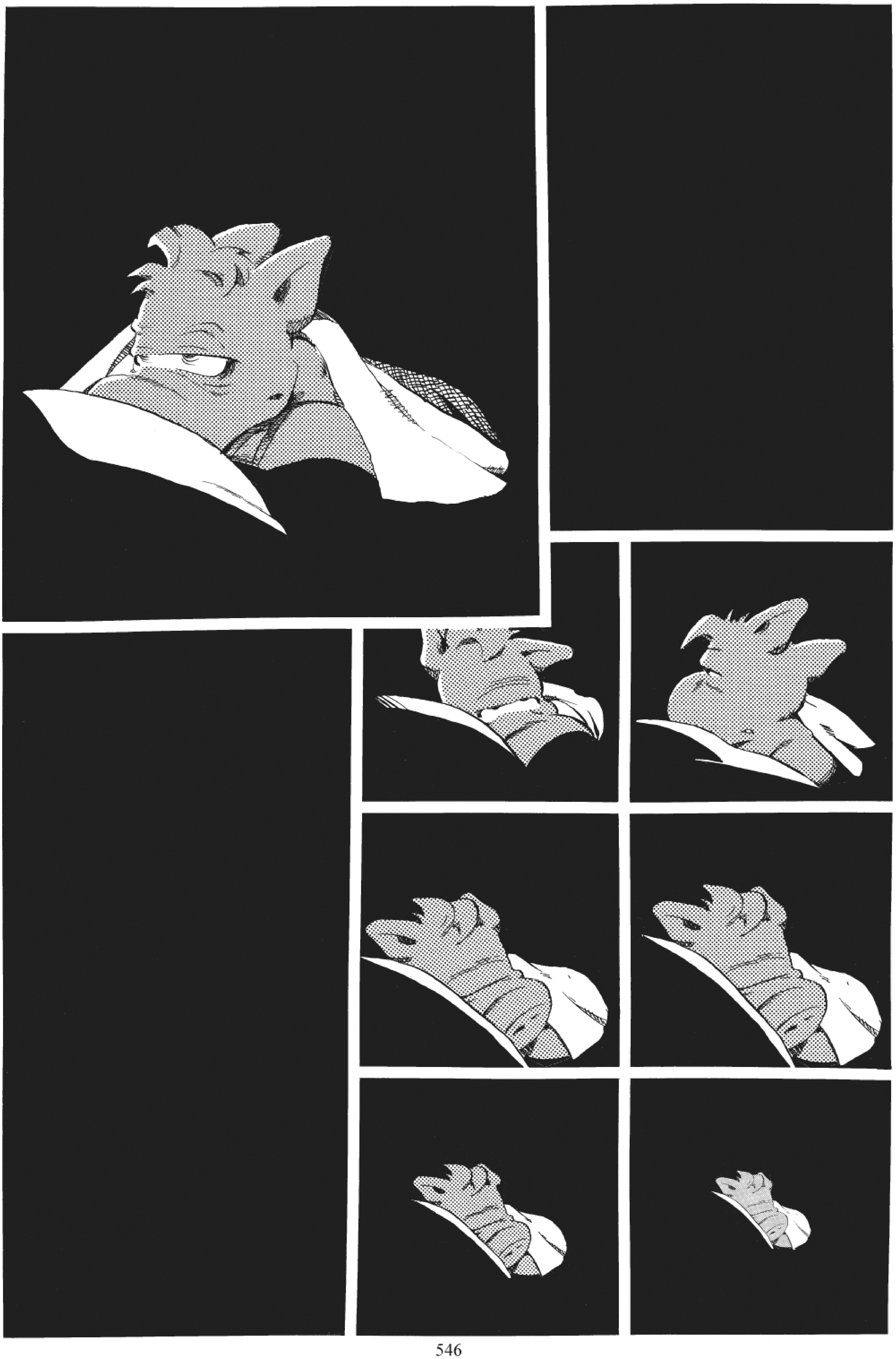


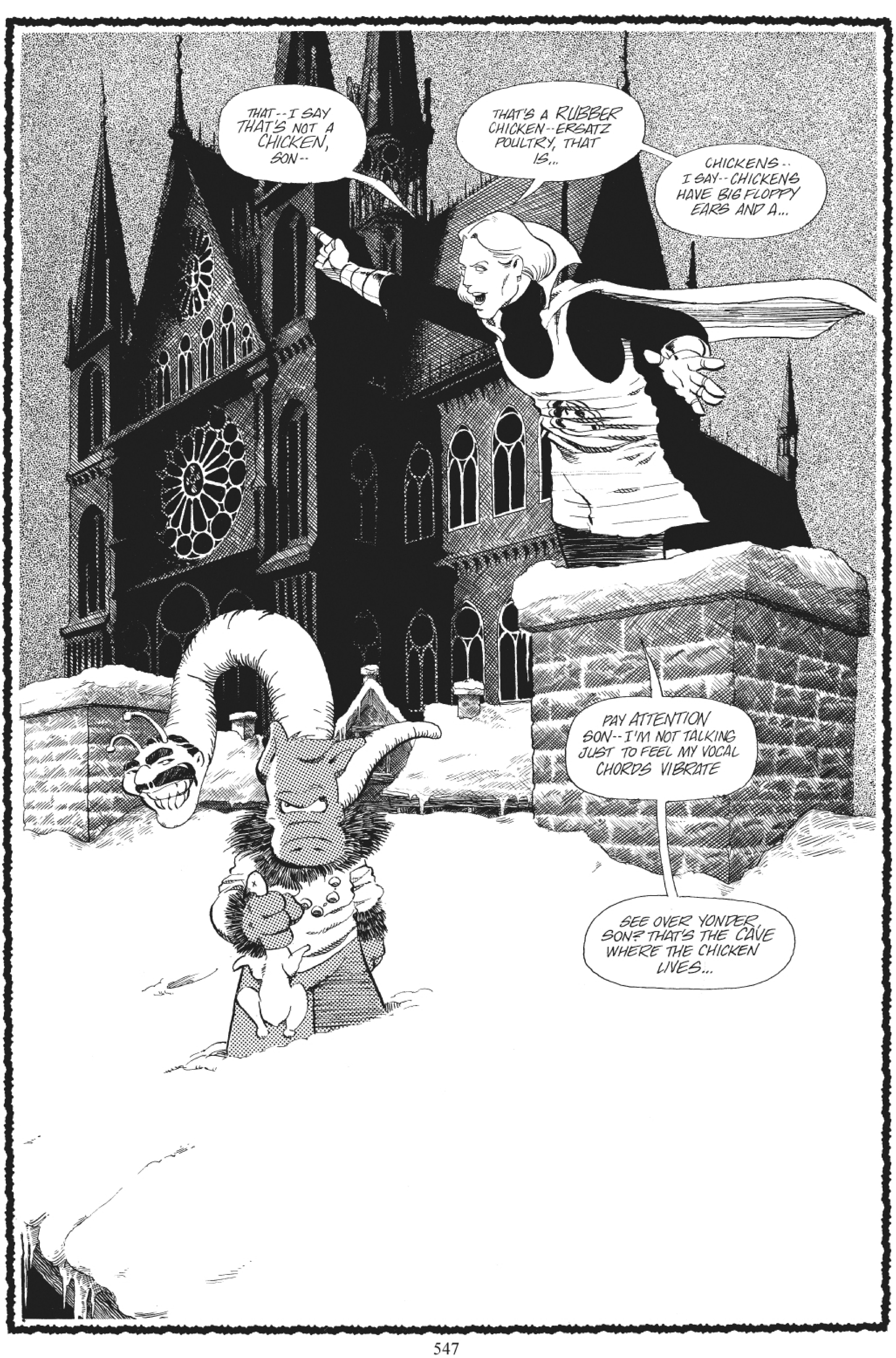


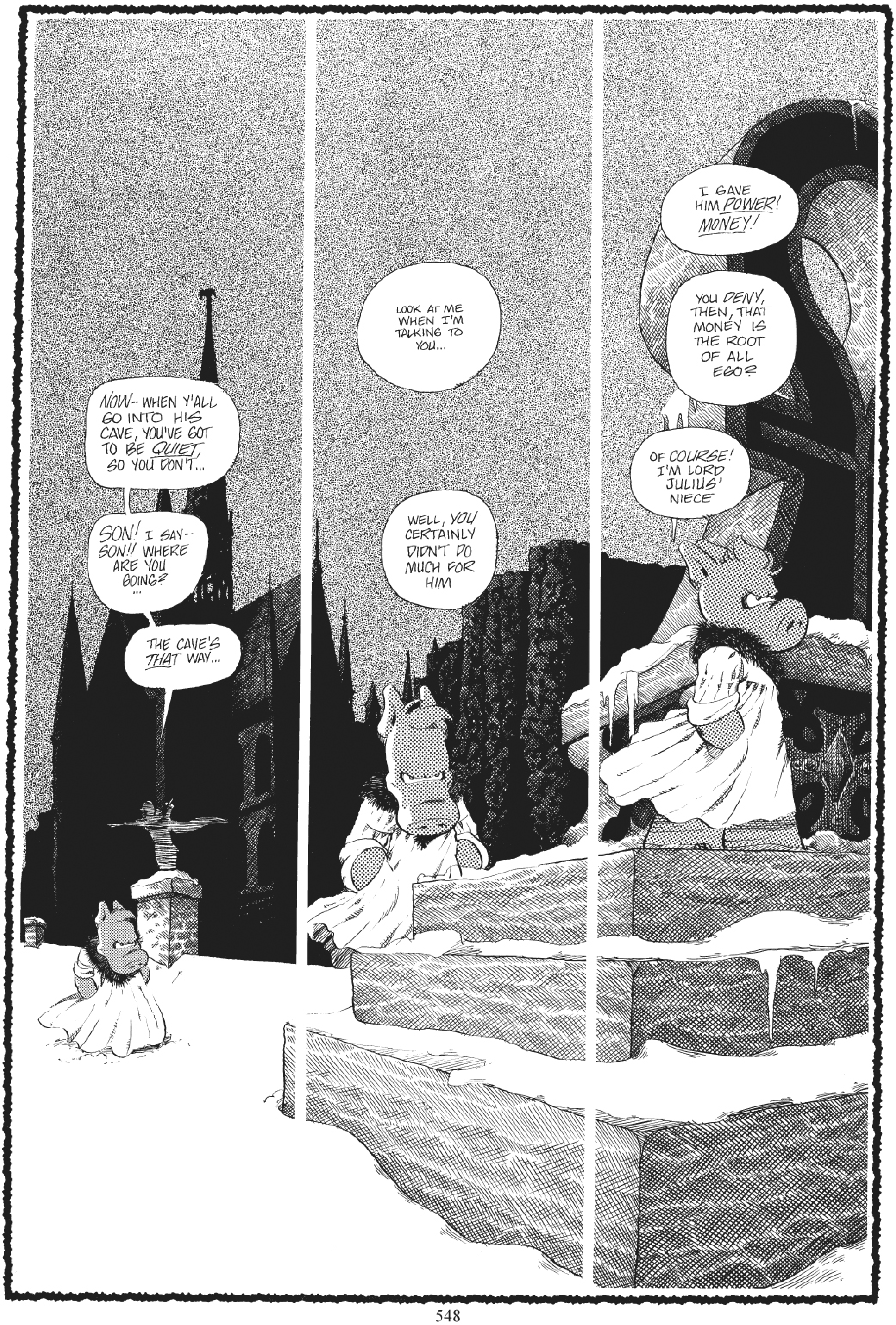


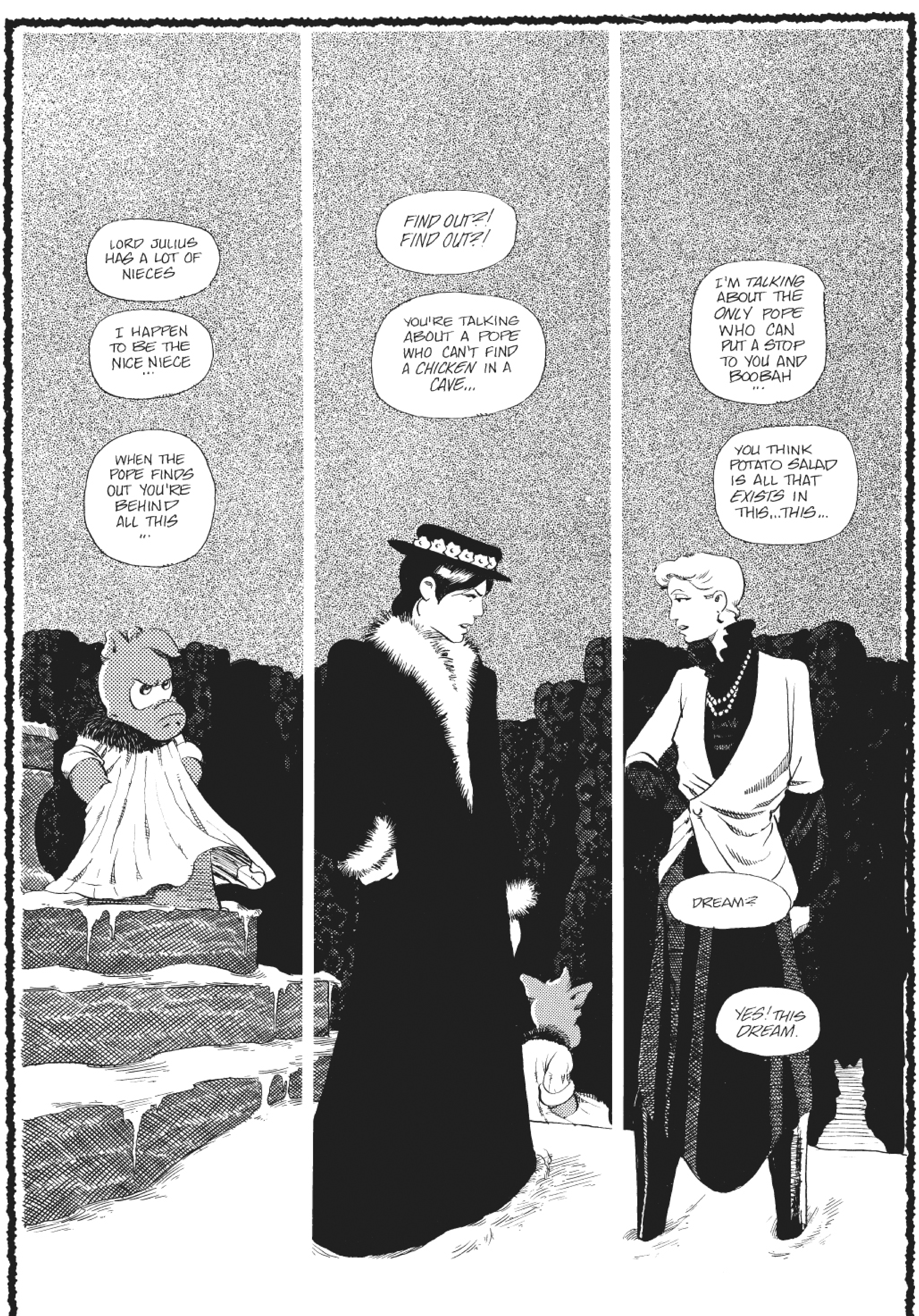


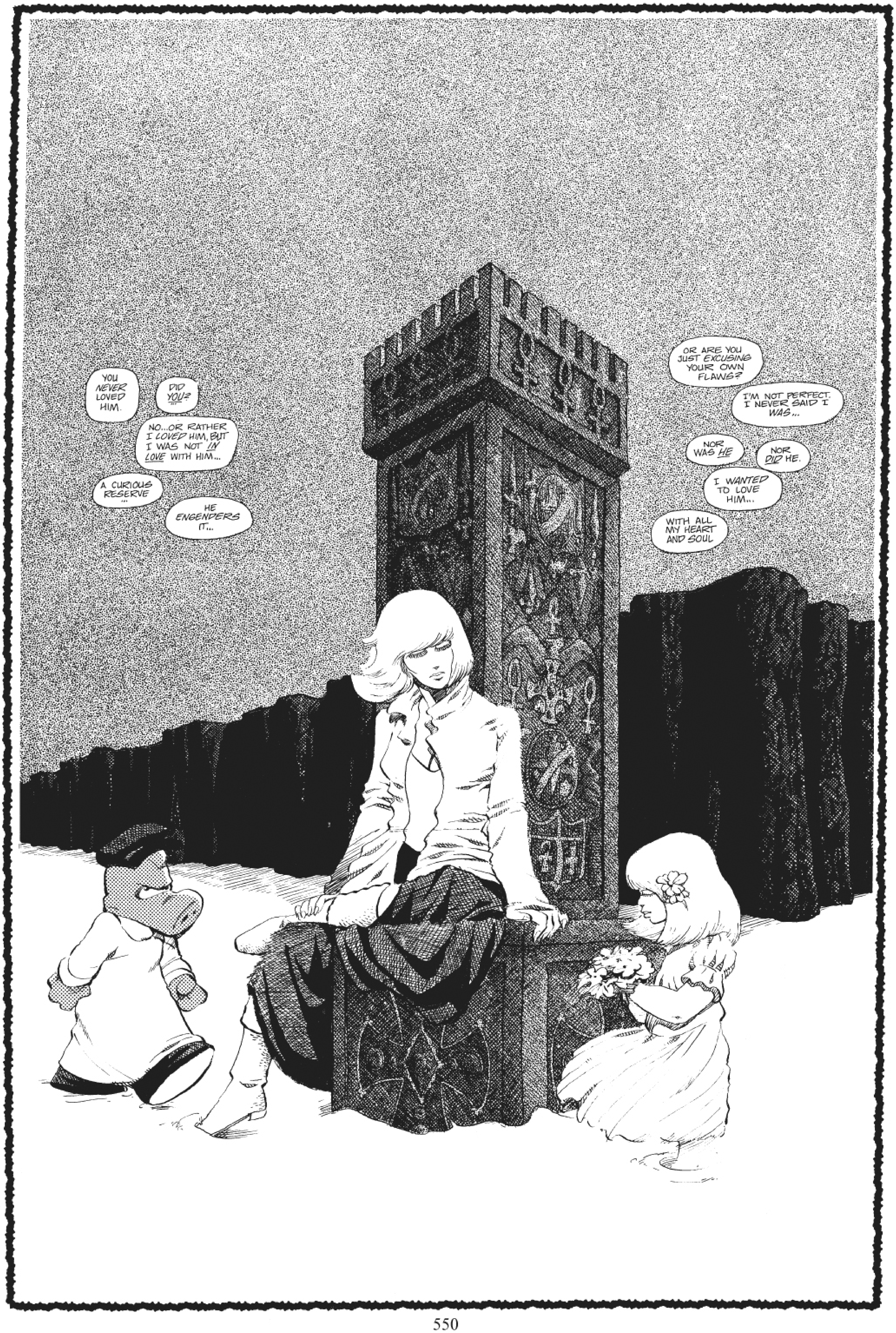


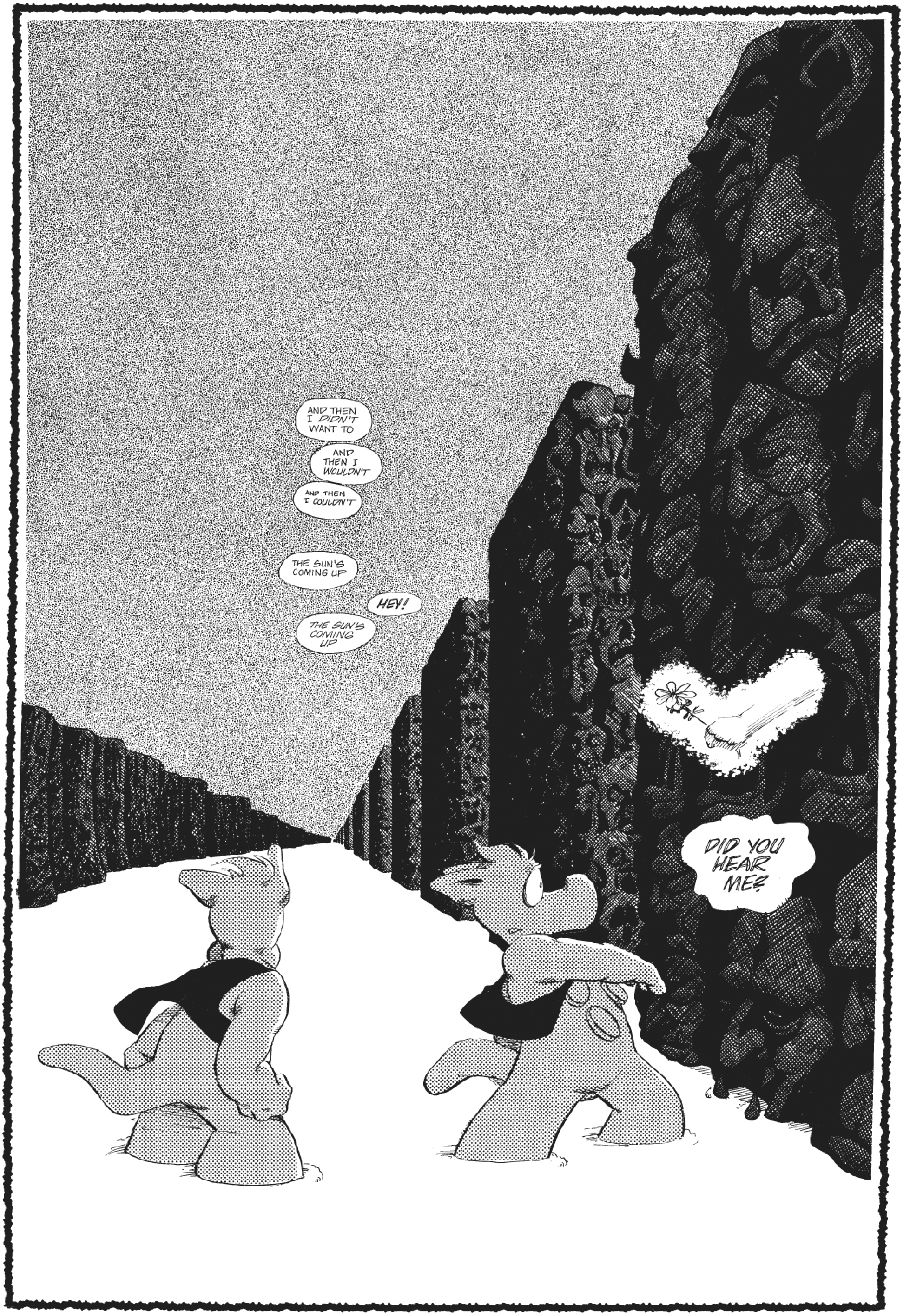


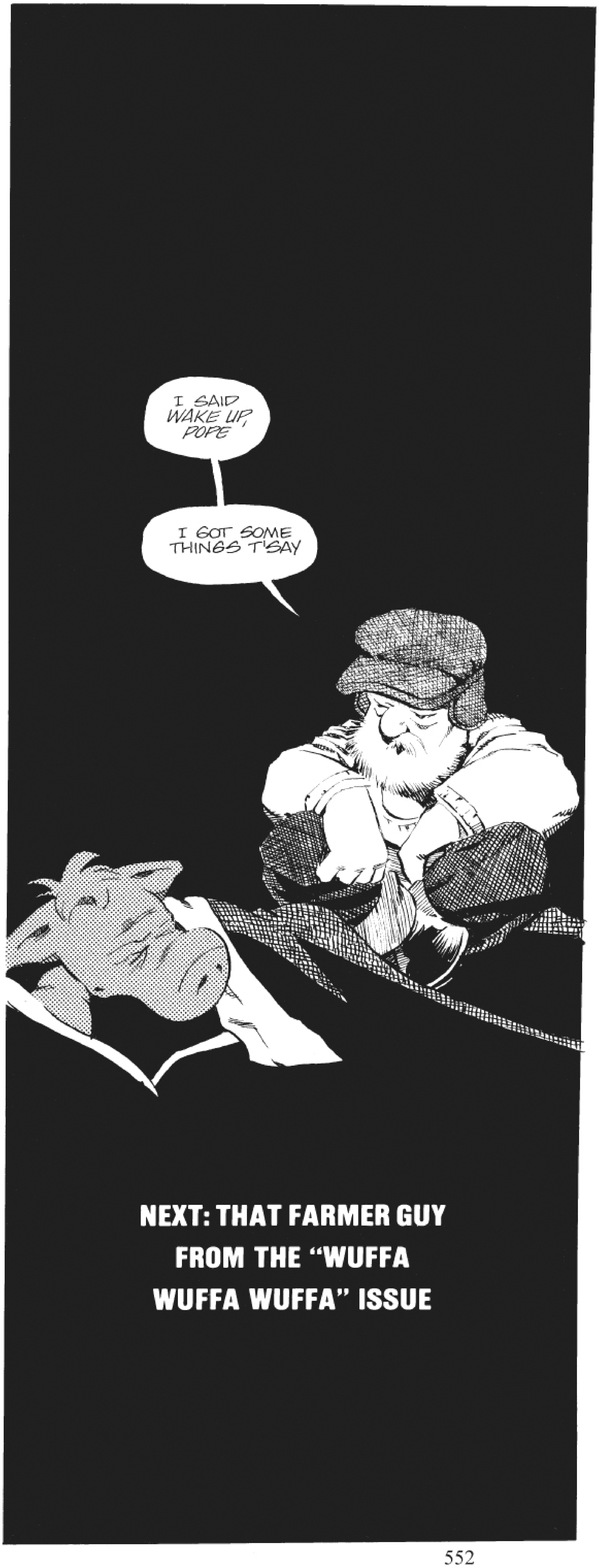

THAT--I SAY THAT'S NOT A CHICKEN, SON--
THAT'S A RUBBER CHICKEN--ERSATZ POULTRY, THAT IS...
CHICKENS--I SAY--CHICKENS HAVE BIG FLOPPY EARS AND A...
PAY ATTENTION SON--I'M NOT TALKING JUST TO FEEL MY VOCAL CHORDS VIBRATE
SEE OVER YONDER, SON? THAT'S THE CAVE WHERE THE CHICKEN LIVES...


NOW-- WHEN Y'ALL GO INTO HIS CAVE, YOU'VE GOT TO BE QUIET, SO YOU DON'T...
SON! I SAY-- SON!! WHERE ARE YOU GOING? ...
THE CAVE'S THAT WAY...
LOOK AT ME WHEN I'M TALKING TO YOU...
WELL, YOU CERTAINLY DIDN'T DO MUCH FOR HIM
I GAVE HIM POWER! MONEY!
YOU DENY, THEN, THAT MONEY IS THE ROOT OF ALL EGO?
OF COURSE! I'M LORD JULIUS' NIECE


LORD JULIUS HAS A LOT OF NIECES
I HAPPEN TO BE THE NICE NIECE ...
WHEN THE POPE FINDS OUT YOU'RE BEHIND ALL THIS ...
FIND OUT?! FIND OUT?!
YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT A POPE WHO CAN'T FIND A *CHICKEN* IN A CAVE...
I'M *TALKING* ABOUT THE *ONLY* POPE WHO CAN PUT A STOP TO YOU AND BOOBAH ...
YOU THINK POTATO SALAD IS ALL THAT *EXISTS* IN THIS...THIS...
DREAM?
YES! THIS DREAM.

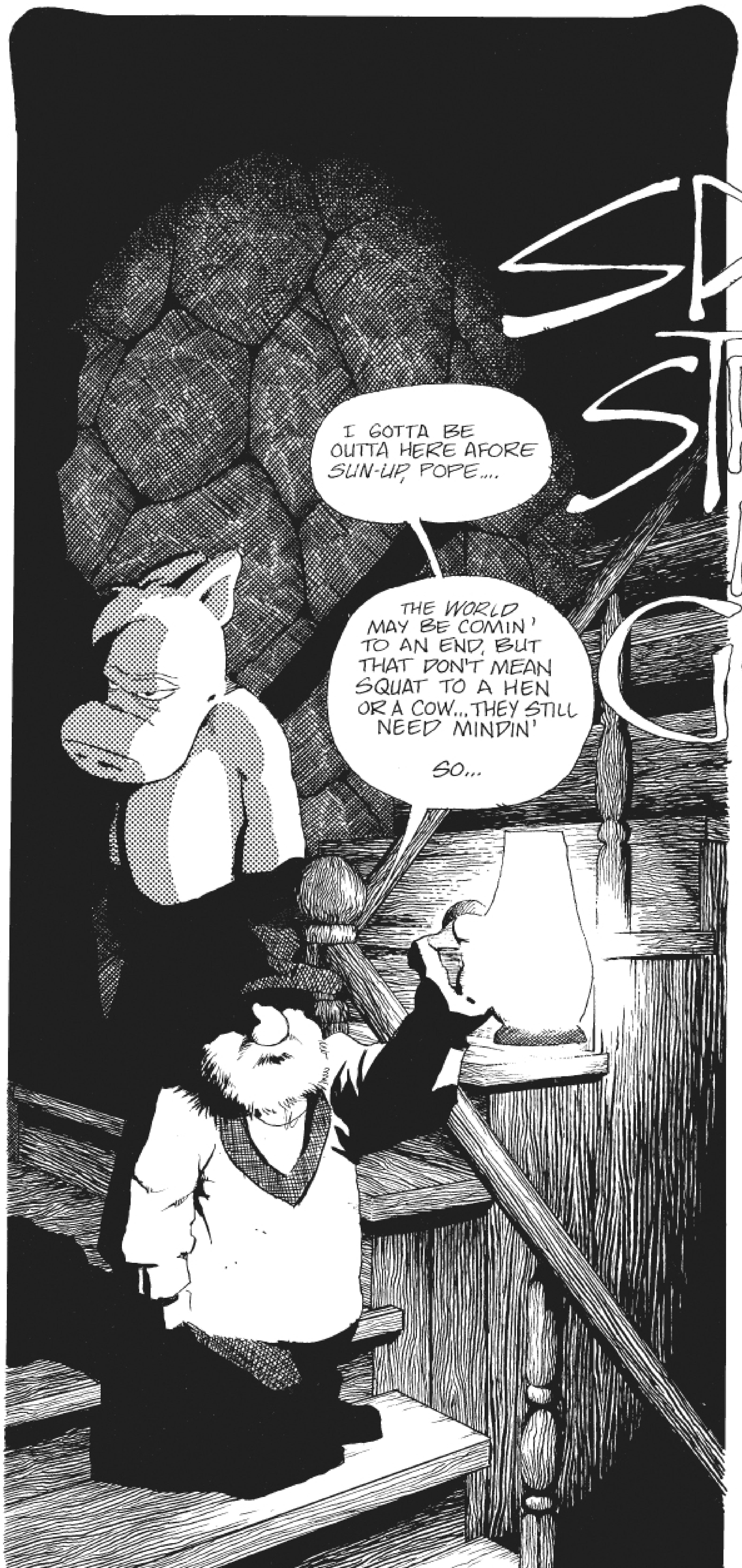

YOU *NEVER* LOVED HIM.
DID *YOU*? ...
NO...OR RATHER I *LOVED* HIM, BUT I WAS NOT *IN LOVE* WITH HIM...
A CURIOUS RESERVE ...
HE *ENGENDERS* IT...
OR ARE YOU JUST *EXCUSING* YOUR OWN FLAWS?
I'M NOT PERFECT. I NEVER SAID I *WAS*...
NOR WAS *HE*
NOR *DID* HE.
I *WANTED* TO LOVE HIM...
WITH ALL MY HEART AND SOUL

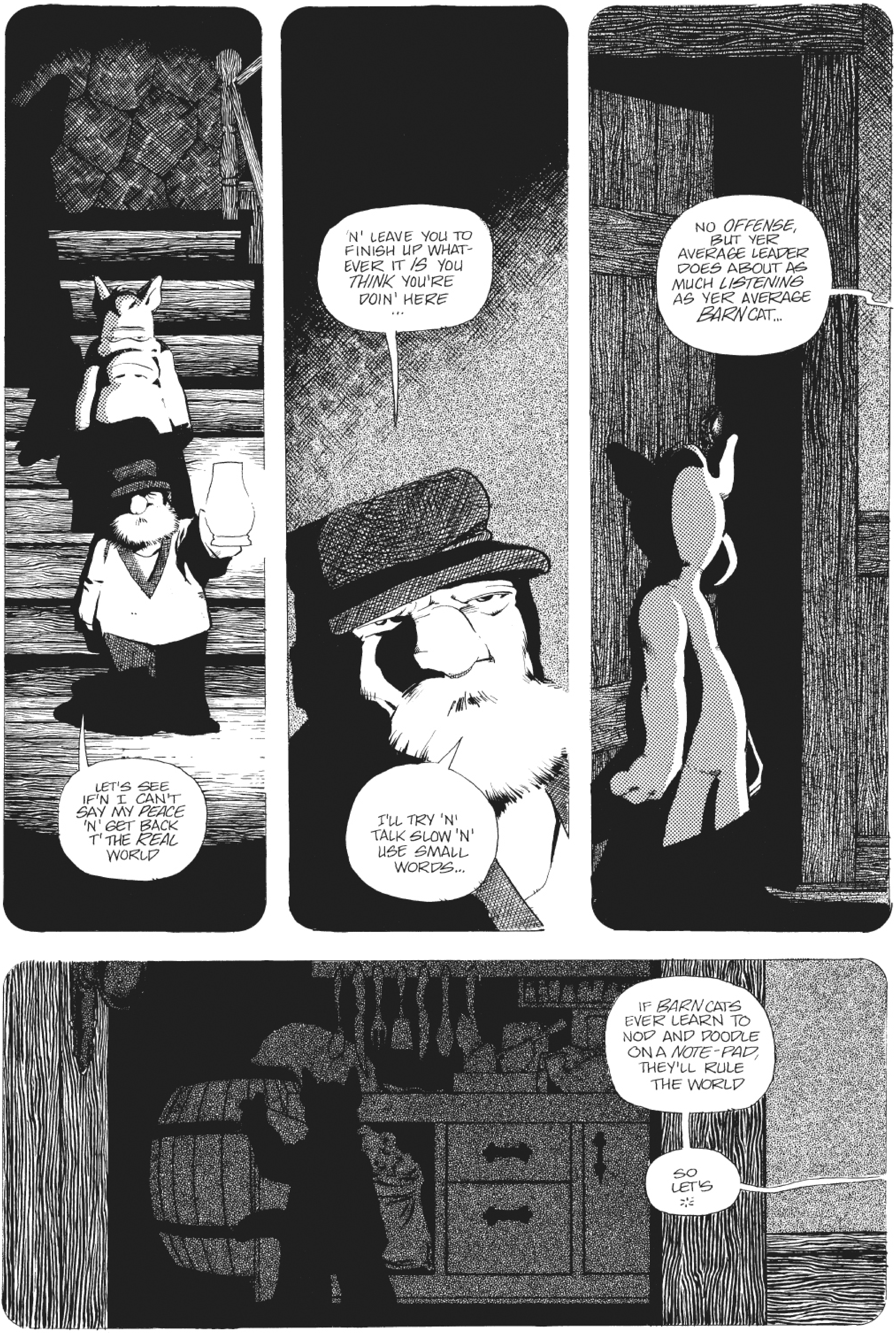

AND THEN I DIDN'T WANT TO
AND THEN I WOULDN'T
AND THEN I COULDN'T
THE SUN'S COMING UP
HEY!
THE SUN'S COMING UP
DID YOU HEAR ME?

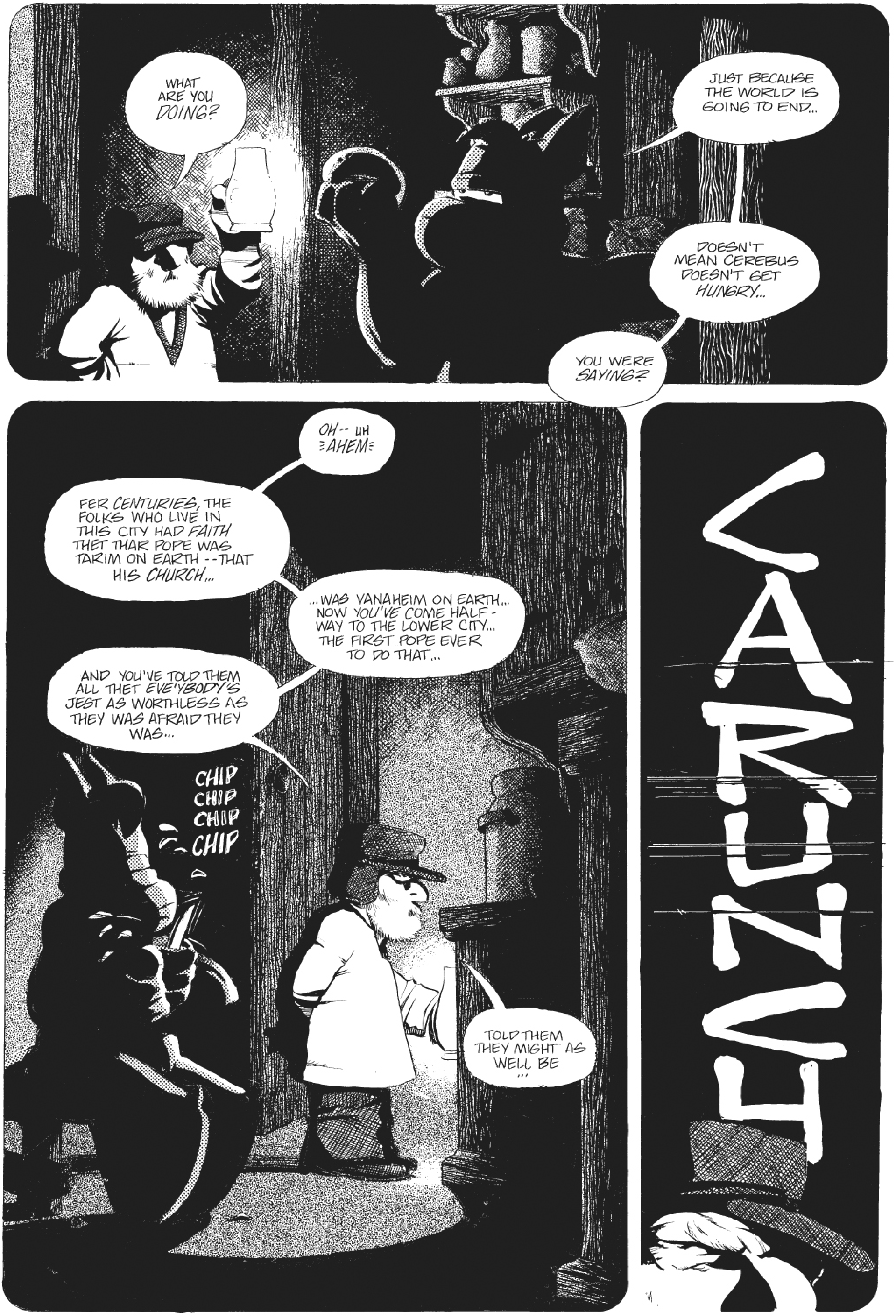

I SAID WAKE UP, POPE
I GOT SOME THINGS T'SAY

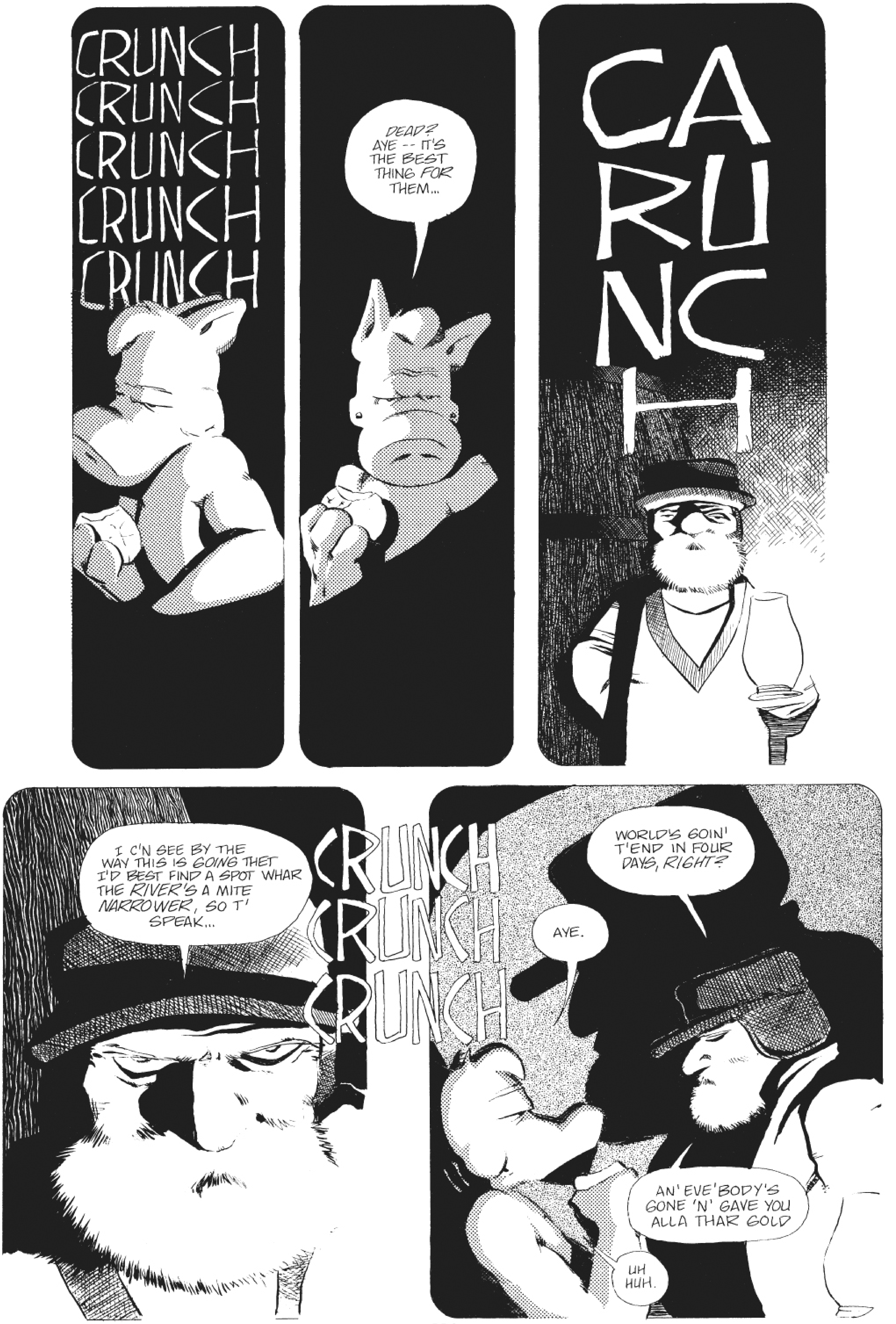
NEXT: THAT FARMER GUY FROM THE "WUFFA WUFFA WUFFA" ISSUE

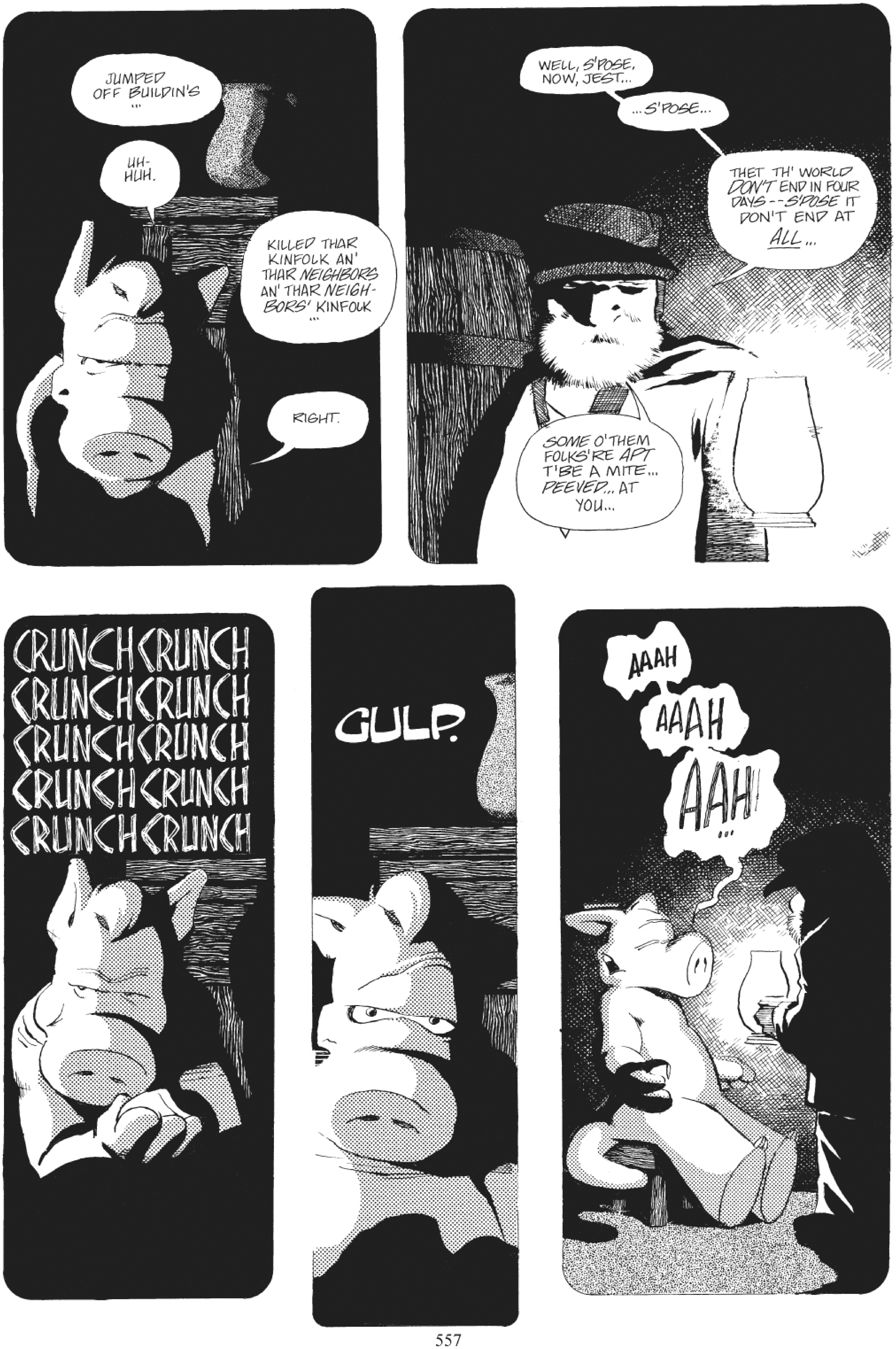
SPINNING STRAW INTO GOLD

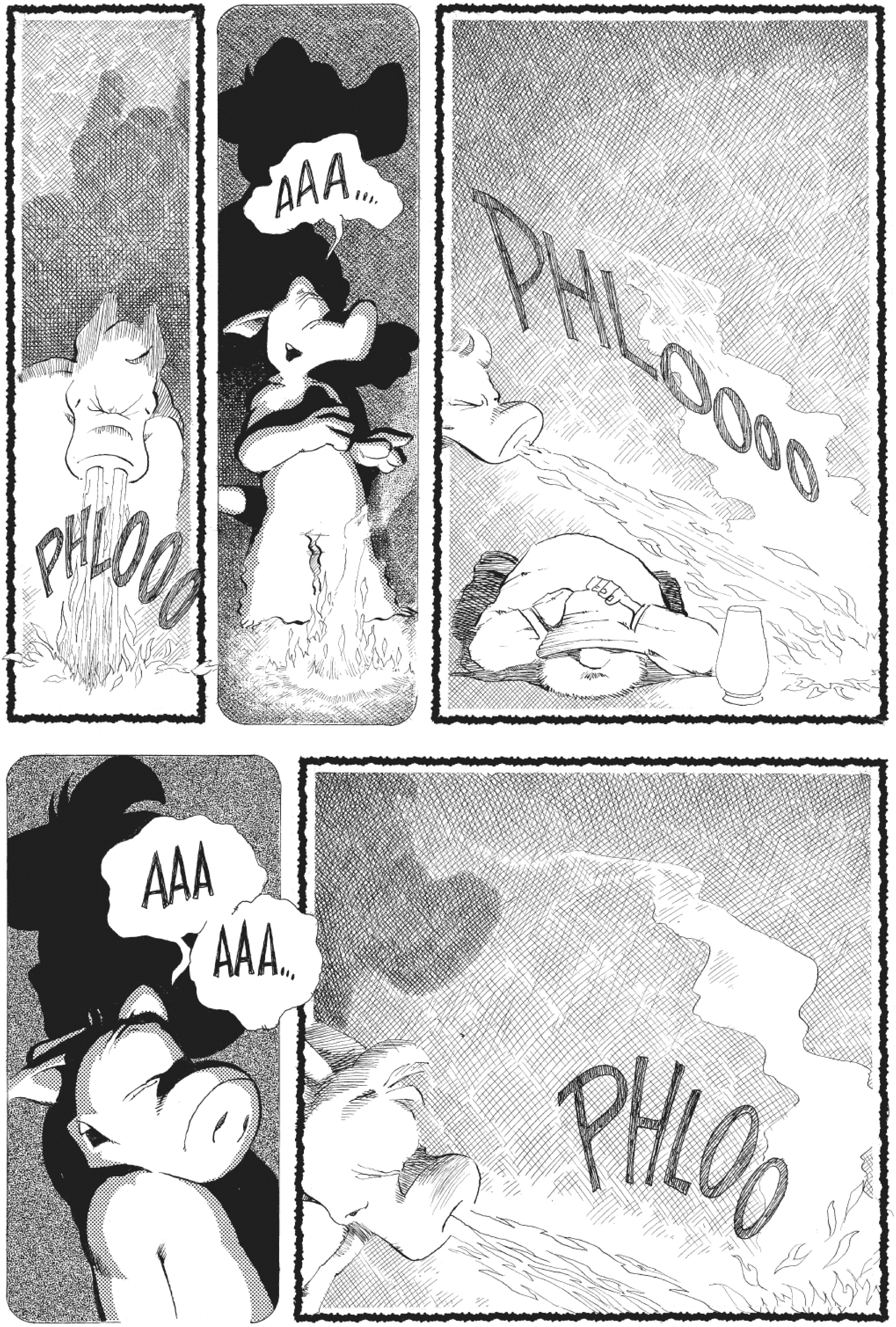

I GOTTA BE OUTTA HERE AFORE SUN-UP, POPE....
THE WORLD MAY BE COMIN' TO AN END, BUT THAT DON'T MEAN SQUAT TO A HEN OR A COW... THEY STILL NEED MINDIN' SO...

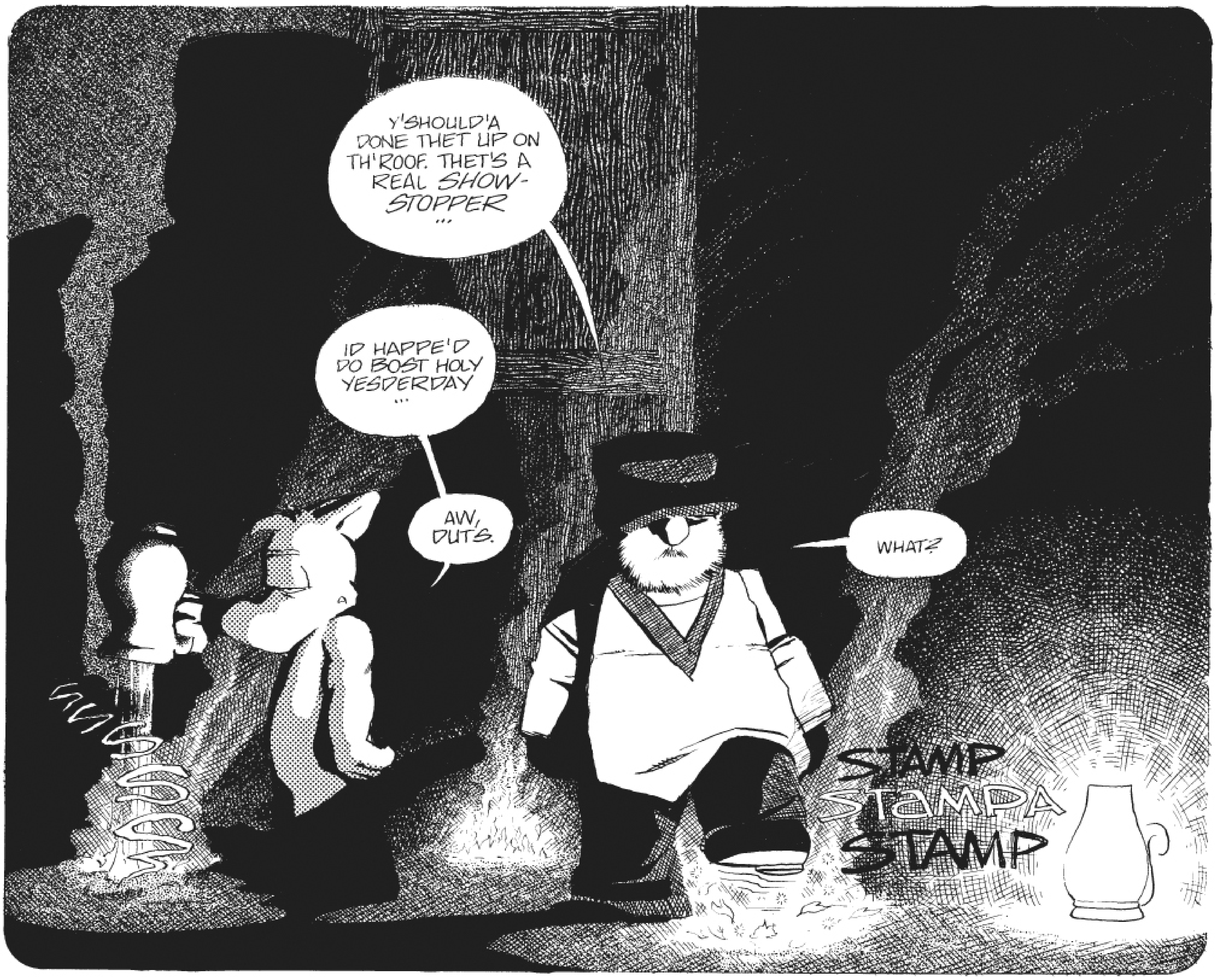

LET'S SEE IF'N I CAN'T SAY MY *PEACE* 'N' GET BACK T' THE *REAL* WORLD
'N' LEAVE YOU TO FINISH UP WHAT-EVER IT *IS* YOU *THINK* YOU'RE DOIN' HERE ...
I'LL TRY 'N' TALK SLOW 'N' USE SMALL WORDS...
NO *OFFENSE*, BUT YER AVERAGE LEADER DOES ABOUT AS MUCH *LISTENING* AS YER AVERAGE *BARN* CAT...
IF *BARN* CATS EVER LEARN TO NOD AND DOODLE ON A *NOTE-PAD*, THEY'LL RULE THE WORLD
SO LET'S

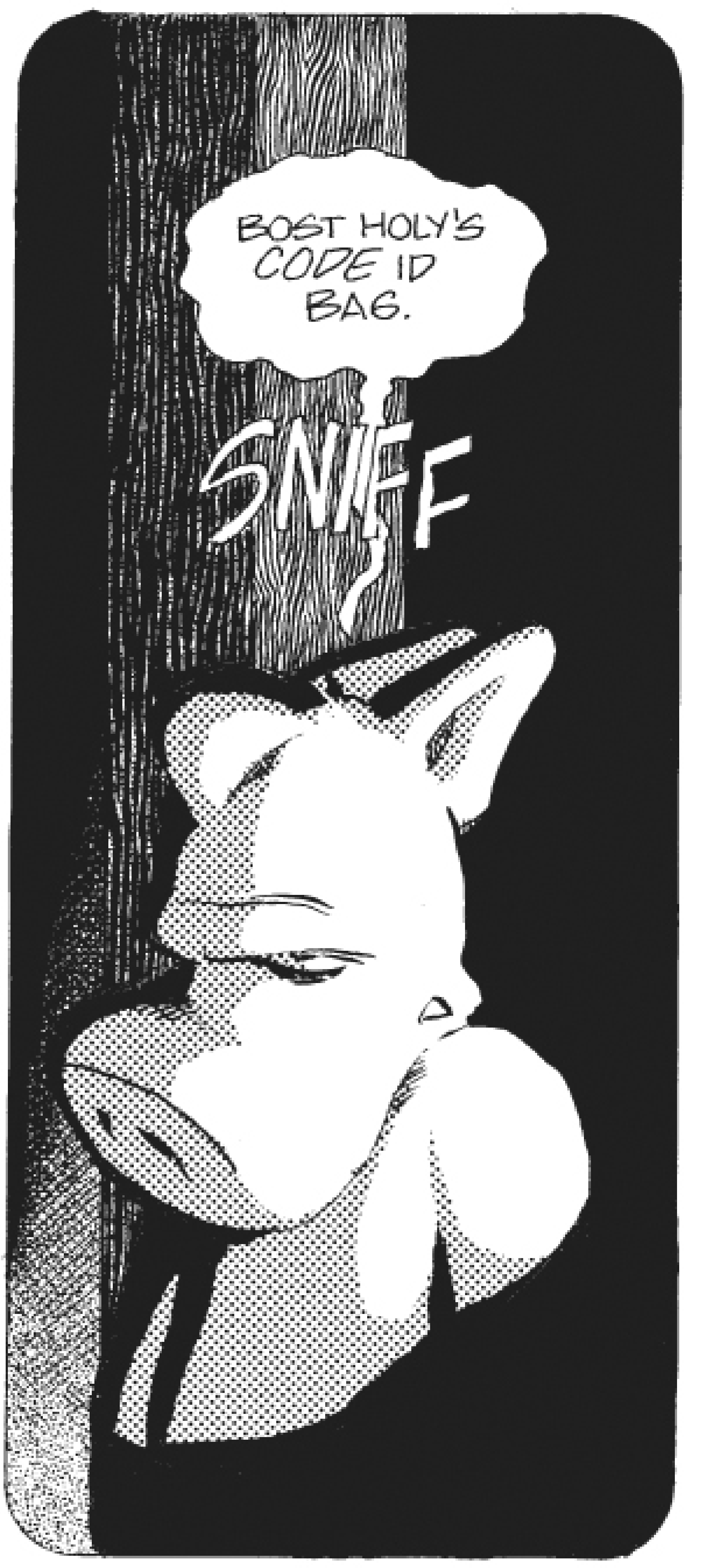

WHAT ARE YOU *DOING?*
JUST BECAUSE THE WORLD IS GOING TO END...
DOESN'T MEAN CEREBUS DOESN'T GET *HUNGRY*...
YOU WERE *SAYING?*
OH-- UH *≡AHEM≡*
FER *CENTURIES*, THE FOLKS WHO LIVE IN THIS CITY HAD *FAITH* THET THAR POPE WAS TARIM ON EARTH --THAT HIS *CHURCH*...
...WAS VANAHEIM ON EARTH... NOW *YOU'VE* COME HALF-WAY TO THE LOWER CITY... THE FIRST POPE EVER TO DO THAT...
AND YOU'VE TOLD THEM ALL THET *EVE'YBODY'S* JEST AS WORTHLESS AS THEY WAS AFRAID THEY WAS...
CHIP CHIP CHIP CHIP
TOLD THEM THEY MIGHT AS WELL BE ...
CRUNCH

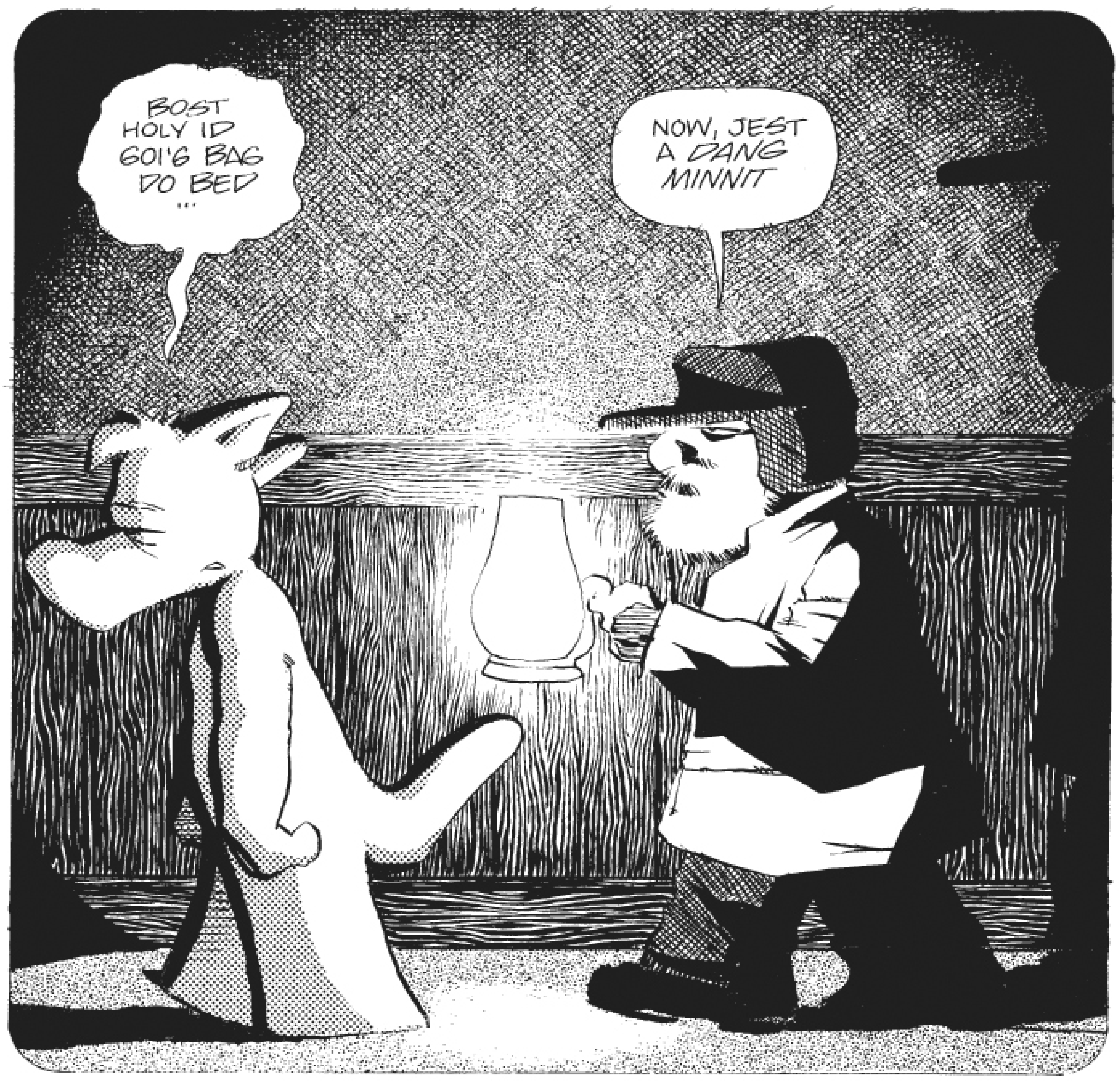

CRUNCH
CRUNCH
CRUNCH
CRUNCH
CRUNCH
DEAD? AYE -- IT'S THE BEST THING FOR THEM...
CARUNCH
I C'N SEE BY THE WAY THIS IS GOING THET I'D BEST FIND A SPOT WHAR THE RIVER'S A MITE NARROWER, SO T' SPEAK...
CRUNCH
CRUNCH
CRUNCH
WORLD'S GOIN' T'END IN FOUR DAYS, RIGHT?
AYE.
AN' EVE'BODY'S GONE 'N' GAVE YOU ALLA THAR GOLD
UH HUH.

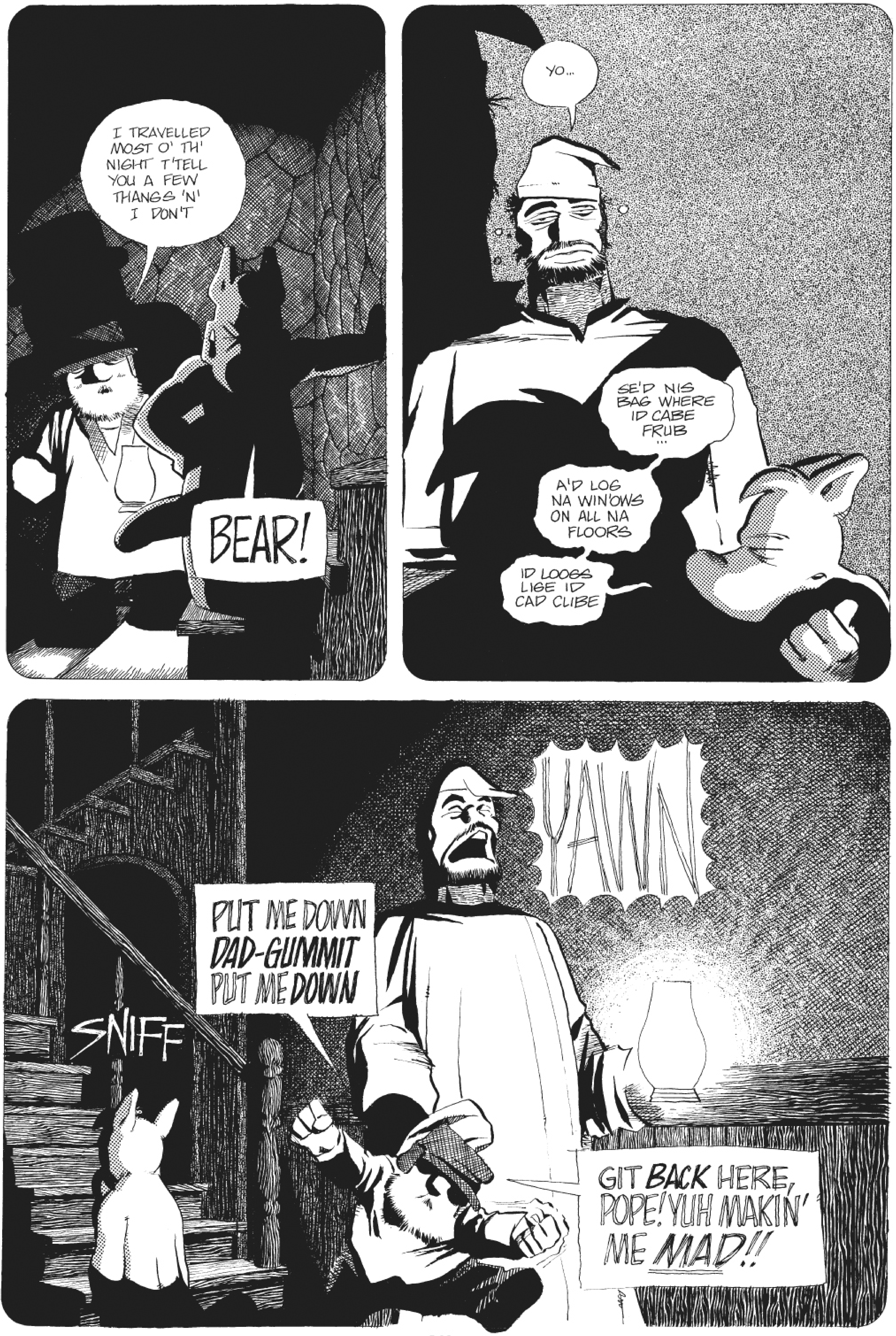

JUMPED OFF BUILDIN'S ...
UH-HUH.
KILLED THAR KINFOLK AN' THAR *NEIGHBORS* AN' THAR *NEIGHBORS'* KINFOLK ...
RIGHT.
WELL, S'POSE, NOW, JEST...
...S'POSE...
THET TH' WORLD *DON'T* END IN FOUR DAYS--*S'POSE* IT DON'T END AT *ALL*...
SOME O'THEM FOLKS'RE *APT* T'BE A MITE... *PEEVED*... AT YOU...
CRUNCHCRUNCH CRUNCHCRUNCH CRUNCHCRUNCH CRUNCHCRUNCH CRUNCHCRUNCH
GULP.
AAAH
AAAH
AAH!!...

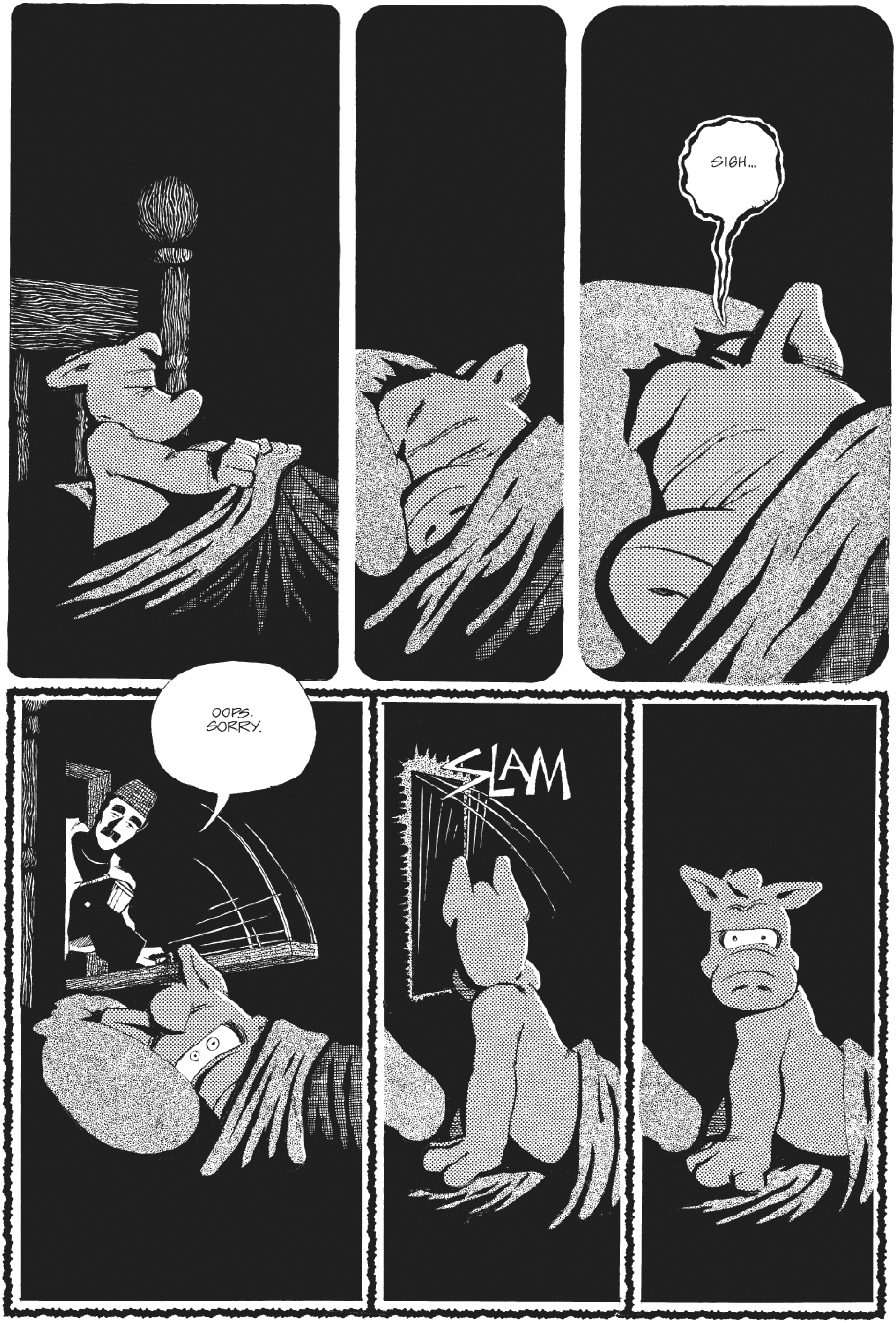

PHLOOO
AAA...
PHLOOOOO
AAA
AAA...
PHLOO

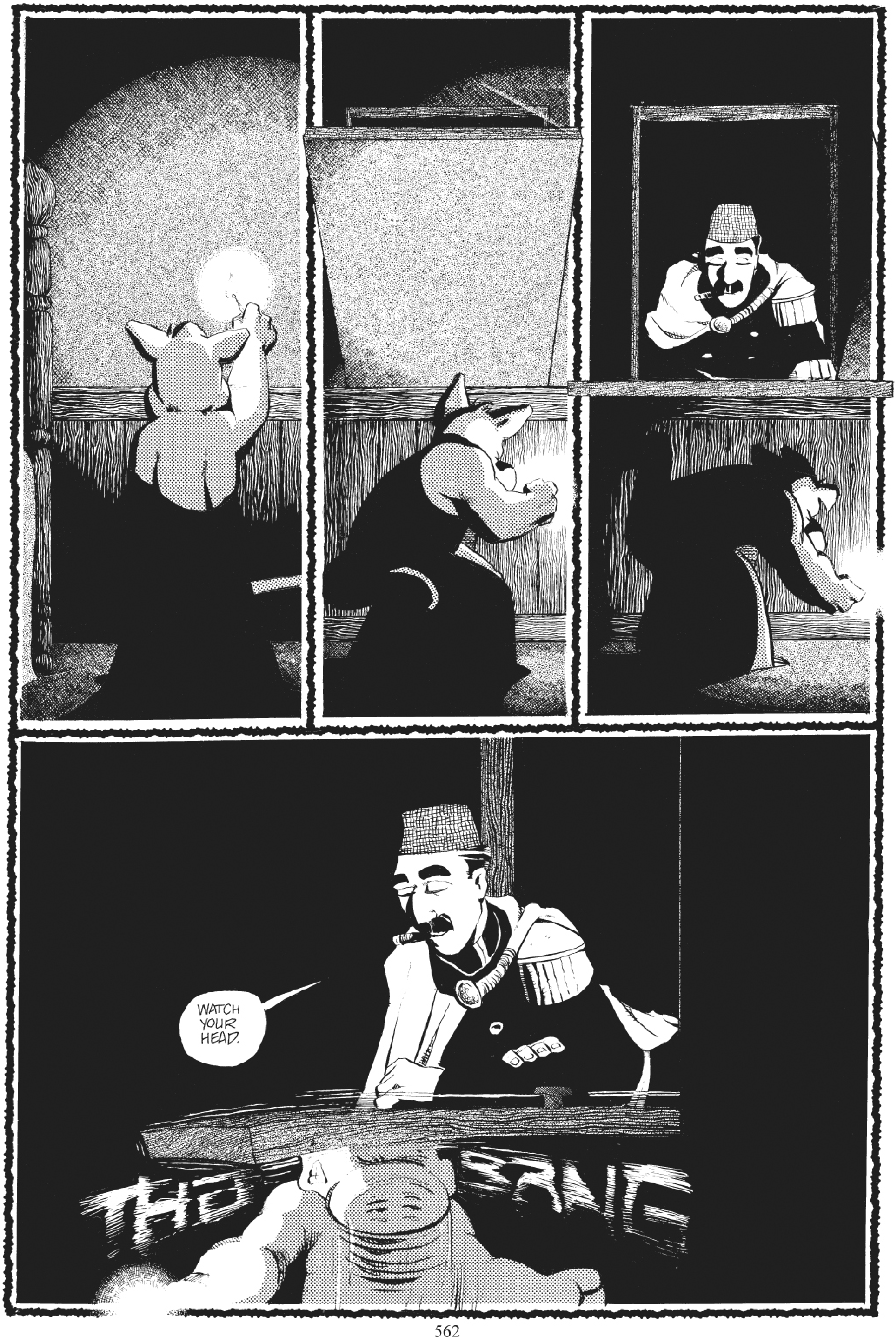

Y'SHOULD'A DONE THET UP ON TH'ROOF. THET'S A REAL *SHOW-STOPPER* ...
ID HAPPE'D DO BOST HOLY YESDERDAY ...
AW, DUTS.
WHAT?
SSSSSSSS
STAMP STAMPA STAMP

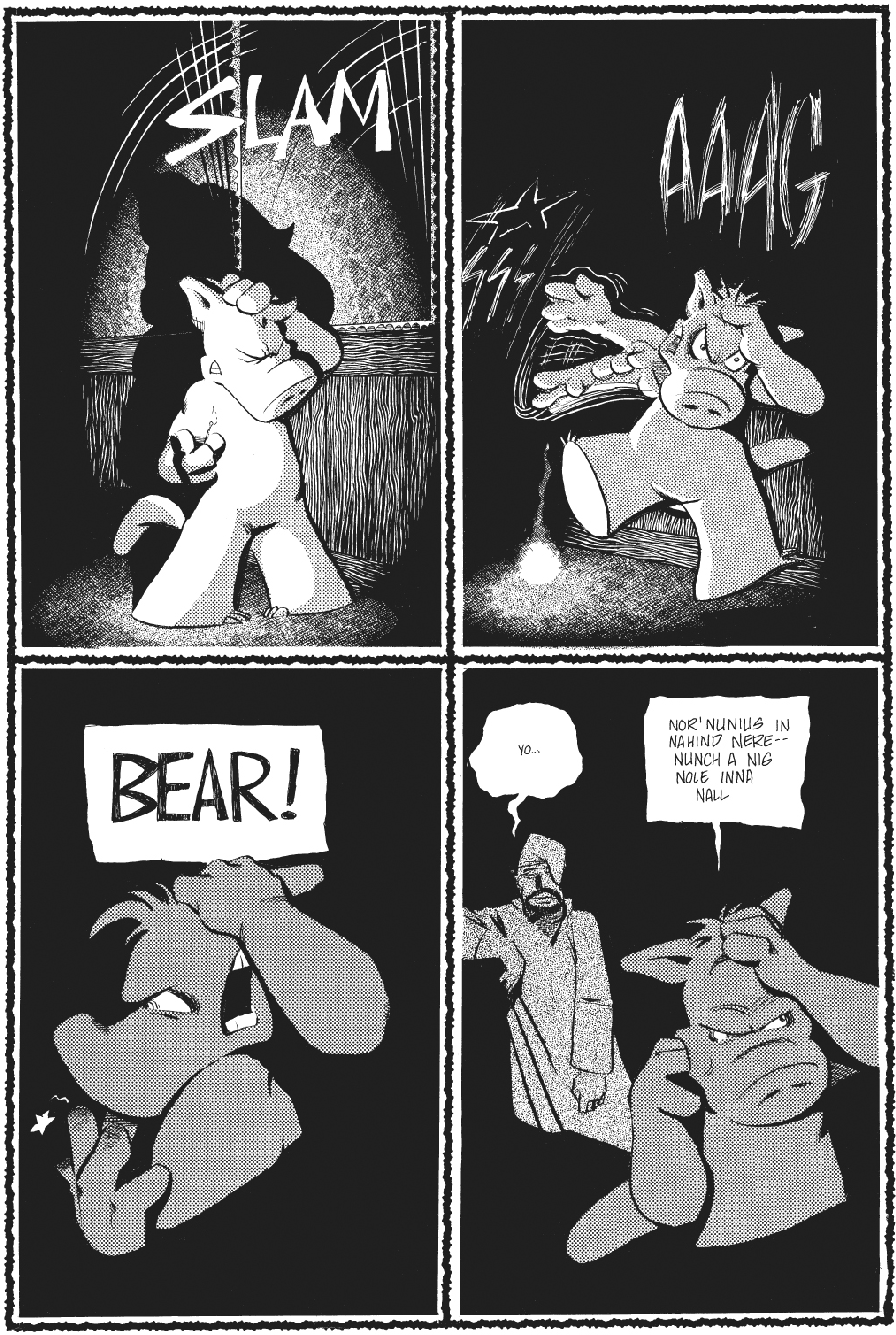

BOST HOLY'S *CODE* ID BAG.
SNIFF

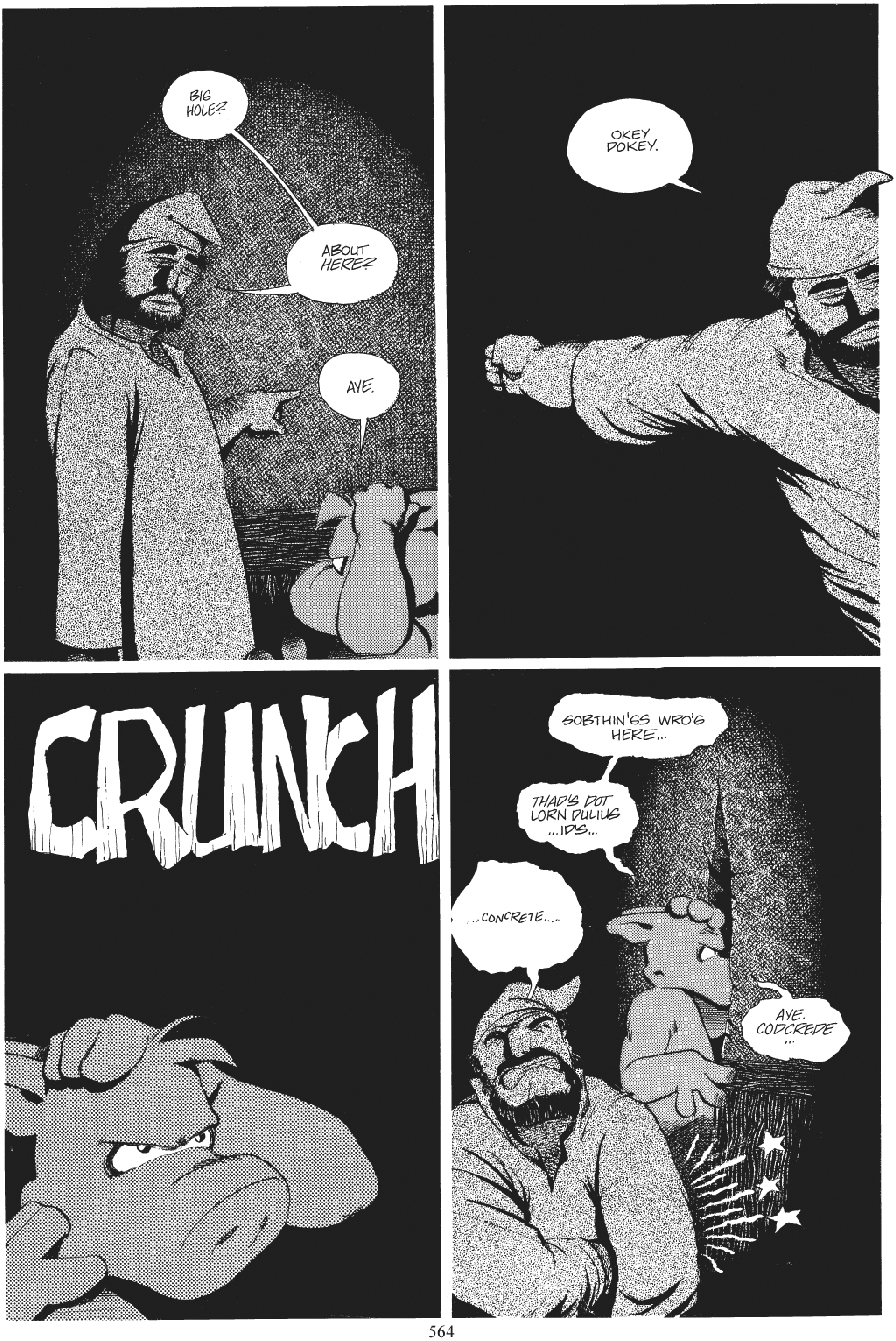

BOST HOLY ID GOI'G BAG DO BED ...
NOW, JEST A *DANG* MINNIT

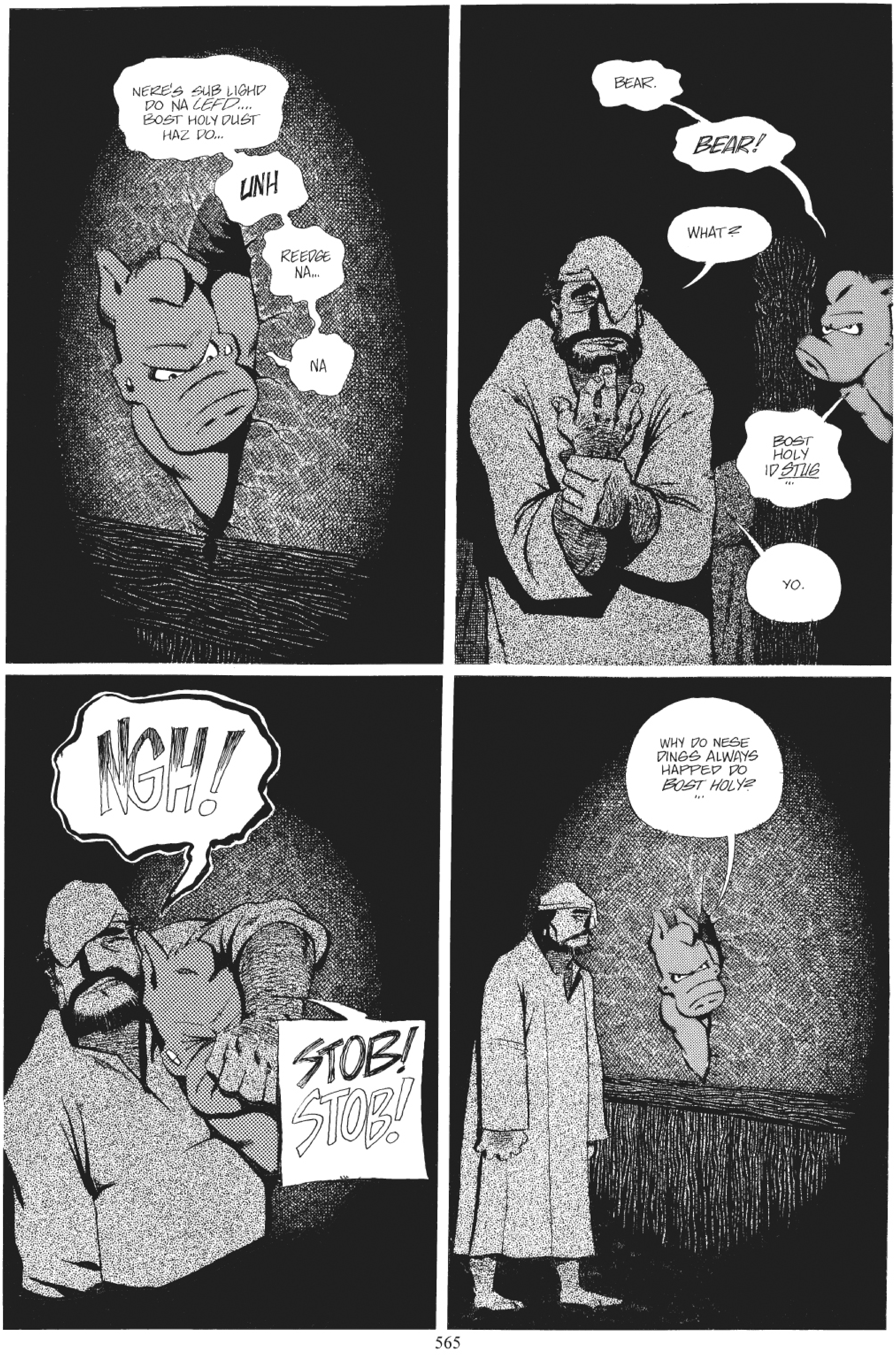

I TRAVELLED MOST O' TH' NIGHT T'TELL YOU A FEW THANGS 'N' I DON'T
BEAR!
YO...
SE'D NIS BAG WHERE ID CABE FRUB ...
A'D LOG NA WIN'OWS ON ALL NA FLOORS
ID LOOGS LIGE ID CAD CLIBE
YAWN
PUT ME DOWN DAD-GUMMIT PUT ME DOWN
SNIFF
GIT BACK HERE, POPE! YUH MAKIN' ME MAD!!

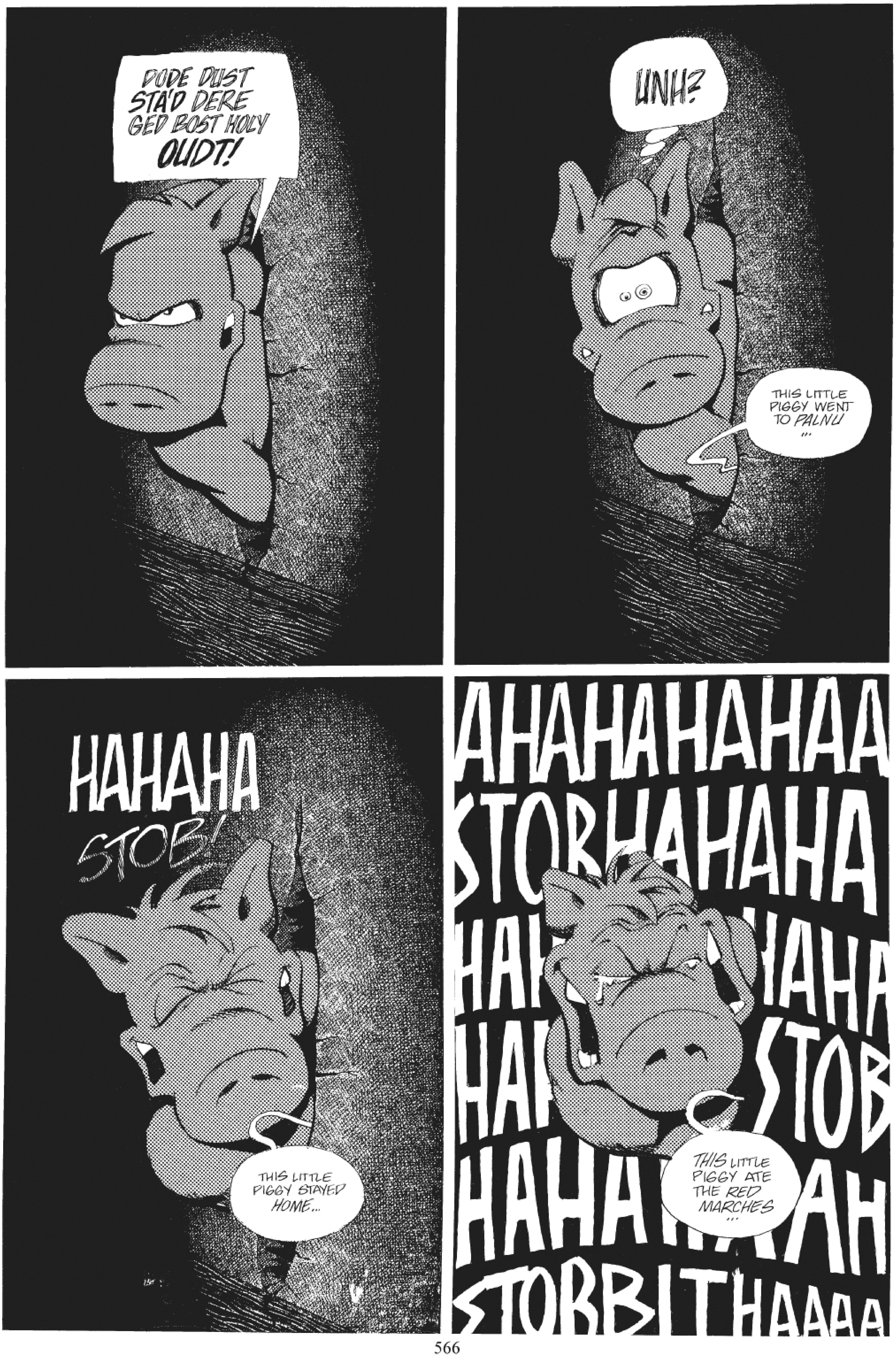

SIGH...
OOPS. SORRY.
SLAM

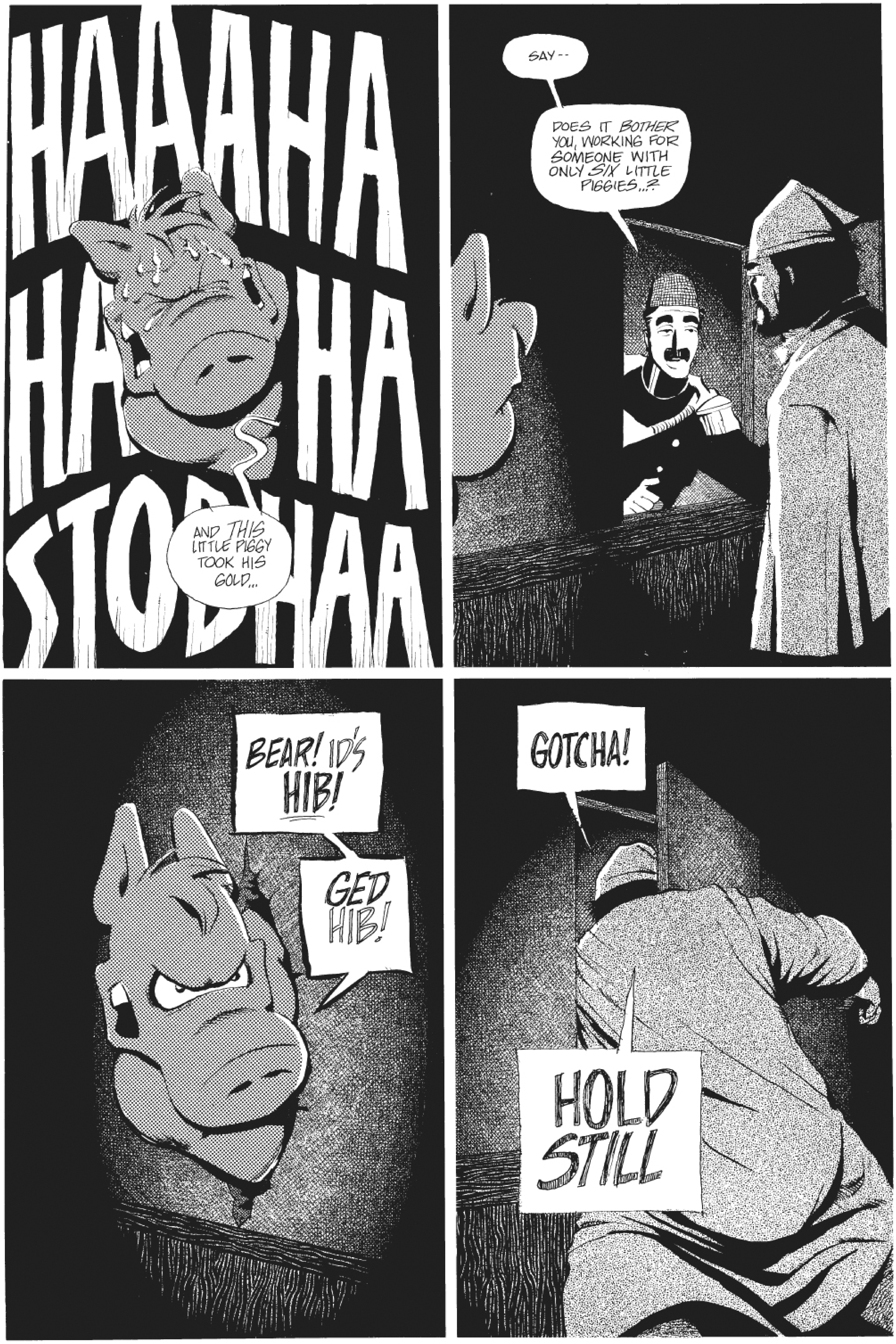

WATCH YOUR HEAD.
THD
BANG

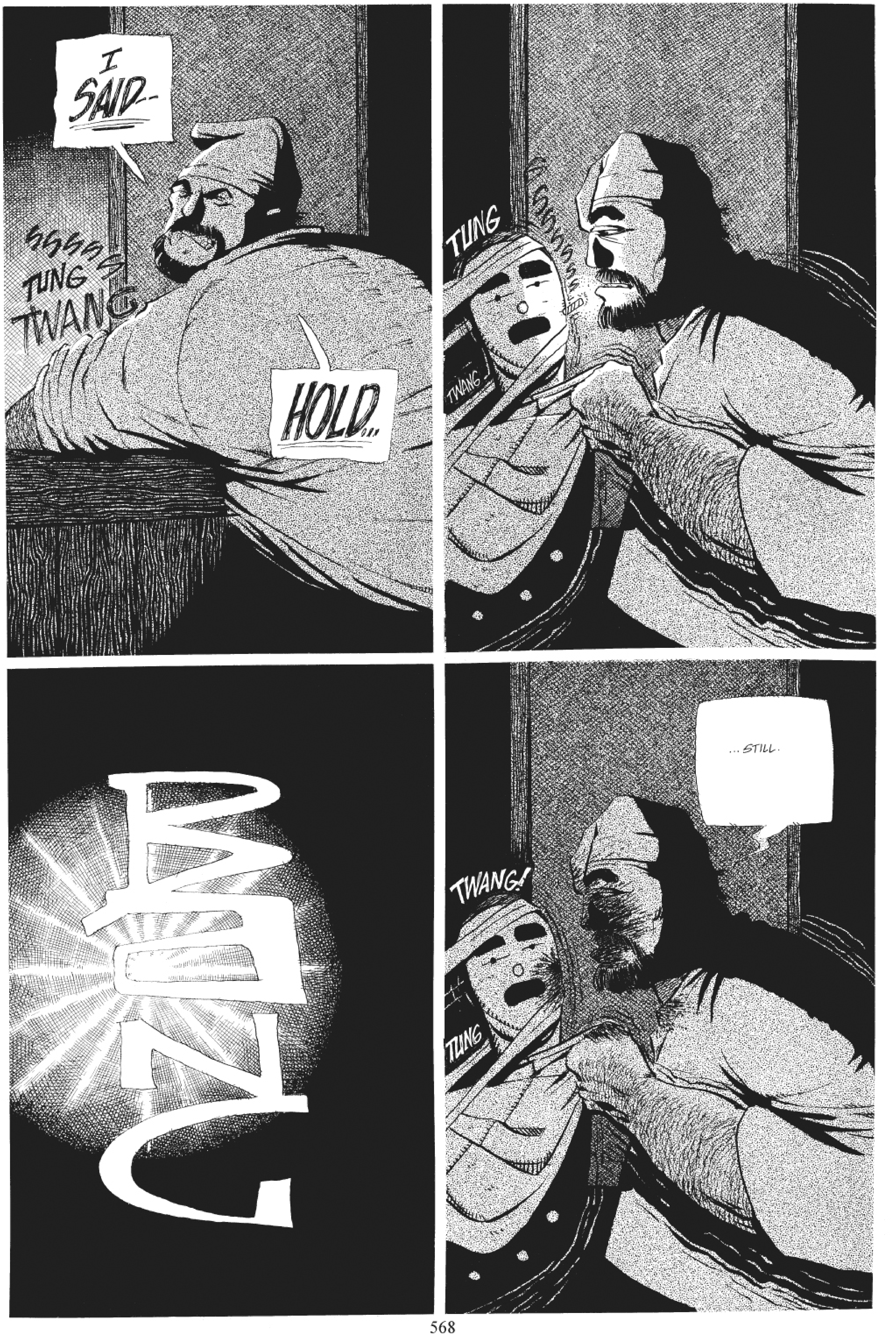

SLAM
AAAG
BEAR!
YO...
NOR'NUNIUS IN NAHIND NERE-- NUNCH A NIG NOLE INNA NALL

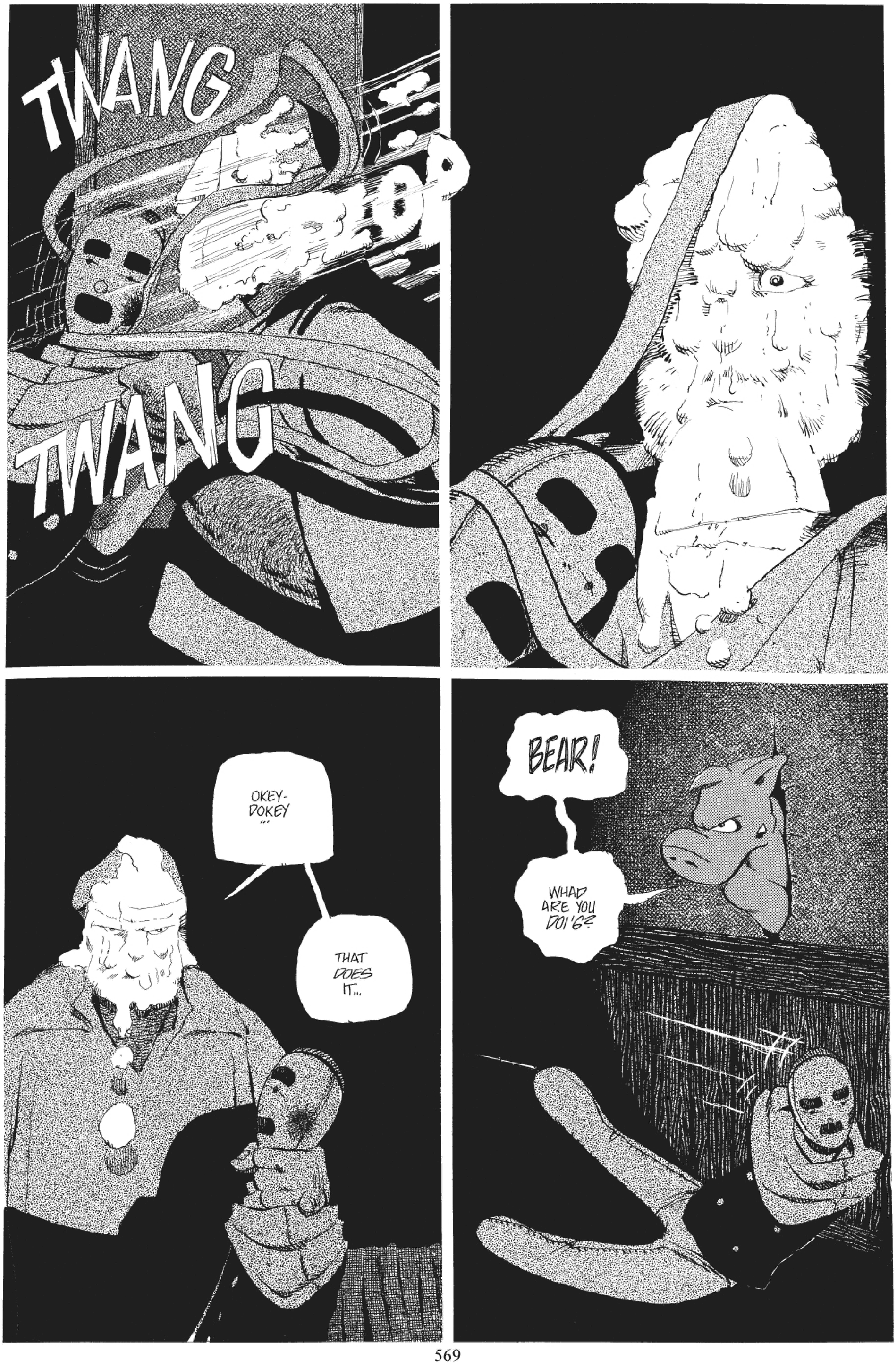

BIG HOLE?
ABOUT HERE?
AYE.
OKEY DOKEY.
CRUNCH
SOBTHIN'GS WRO'G HERE...
THAD'S DOT LORN DULIUS ...ID'S...
...CONCRETE...
AYE. CODCREDE ...

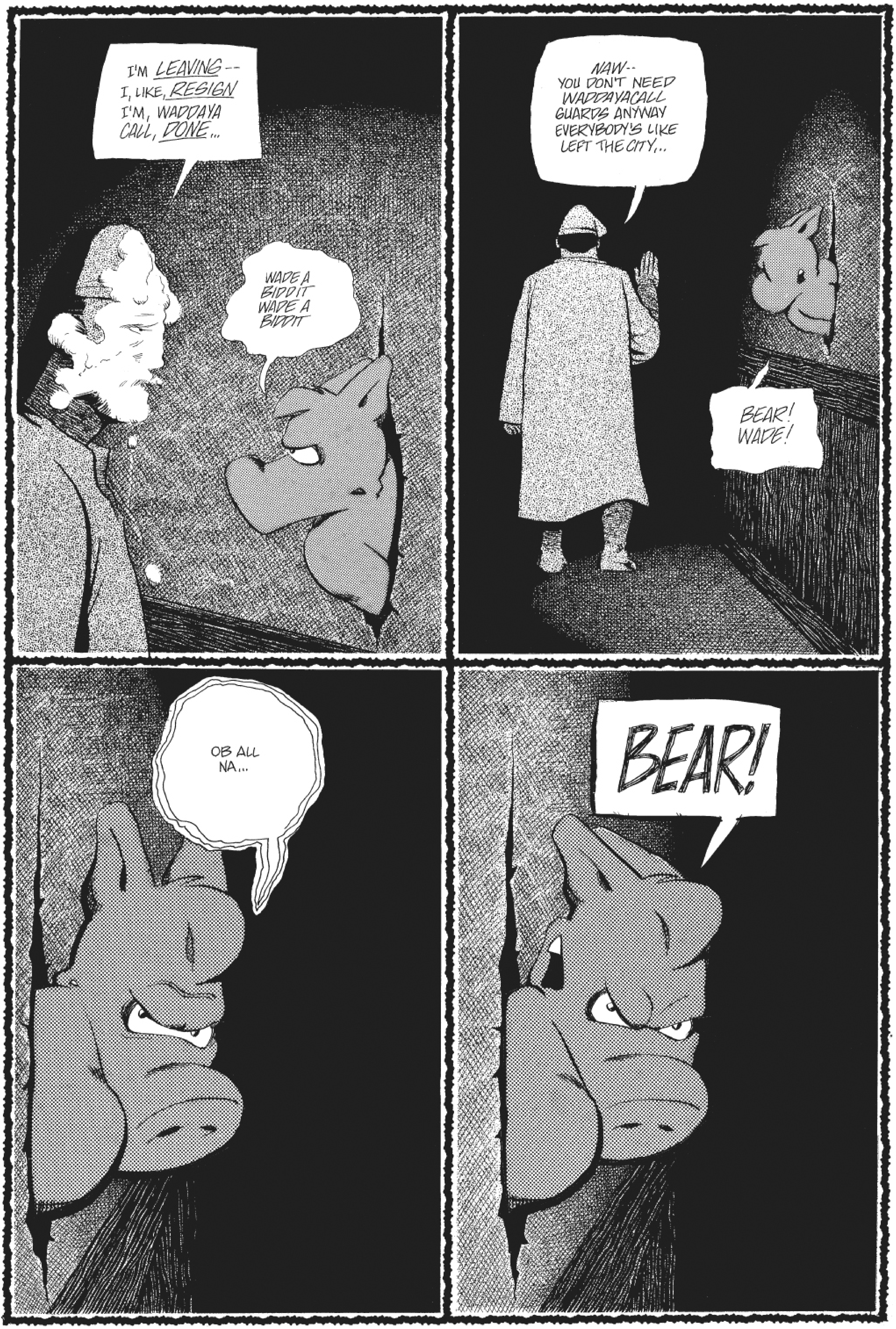

NERE'S SUB LIGHD DO NA LEFD.... BOST HOLY DUST HAZ DO...
UNH
REEDGE NA...
NA
BEAR.
BEAR!
WHAT?
BOST HOLY ID STUG...
YO.
NGH!
STOB! STOB!
WHY DO NESE DINGS ALWAYS HAPPED DO BOST HOLY?...

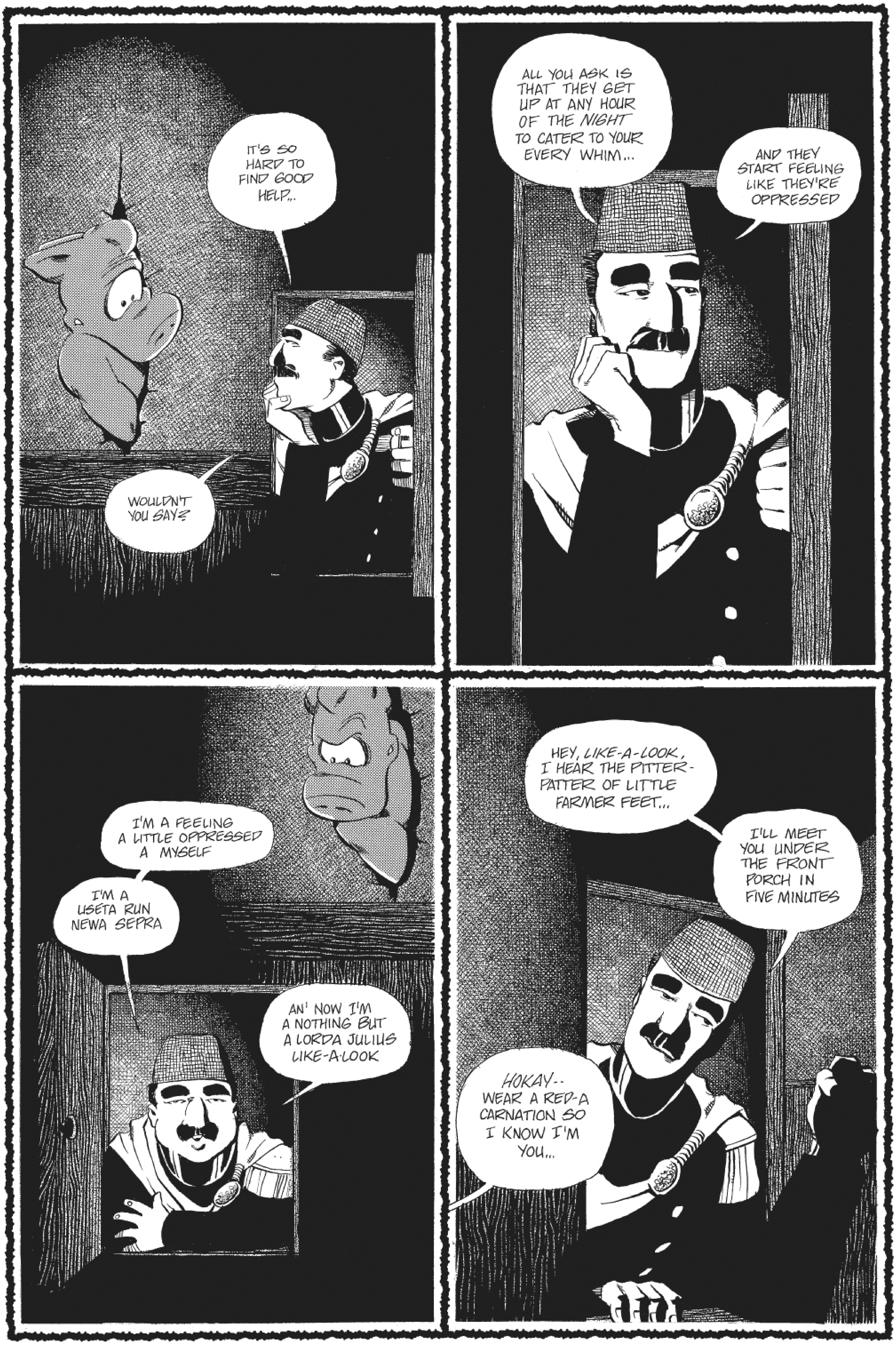

DODE DUST STA'D DERE GED BOST HOLY OUDT!
UNH?
THIS LITTLE PIGGY WENT TO PALNU ...
HAHAHA
STOB!
THIS LITTLE PIGGY STAYED HOME...
AHAHAHAHAA
STOBHAHAHA
HAHAHA
HAHA
HAH STOB
HAHAHAH
THIS LITTLE PIGGY ATE THE RED MARCHES ...
STOBBIT HAAAA

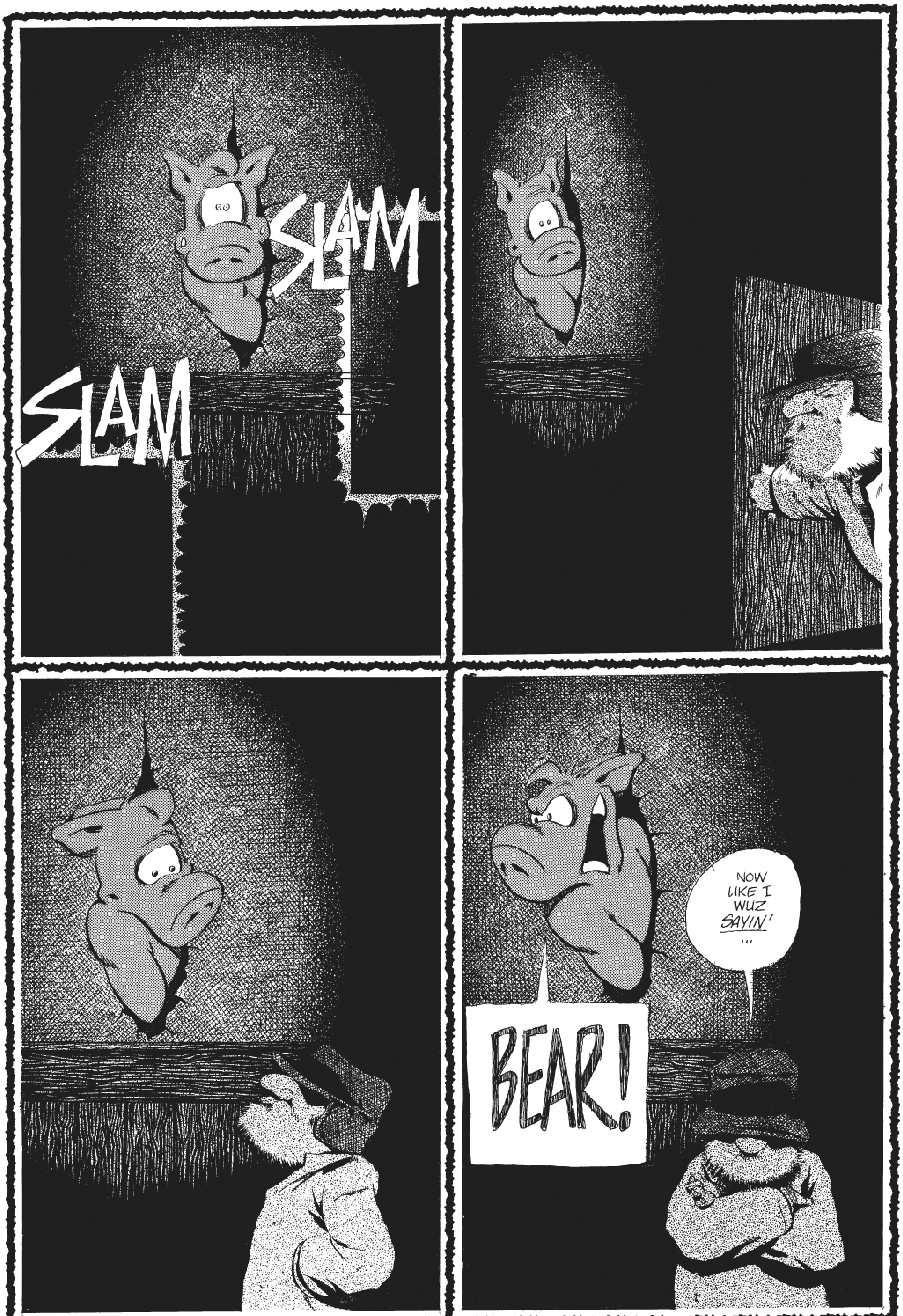

HAAAHA HA HA HA STOP HAA
AND THIS LITTLE PIGGY TOOK HIS GOLD...
SAY--
DOES IT BOTHER YOU, WORKING FOR SOMEONE WITH ONLY SIX LITTLE PIGGIES...?
BEAR! ID'S HIB!
GED HIB!
GOTCHA!
HOLD STILL


I SAID..
SSSSS
TUNG
TWANG
HOLD...
TUNG
TWANG
TWANG
TWANG!
TUNG
...STILL.

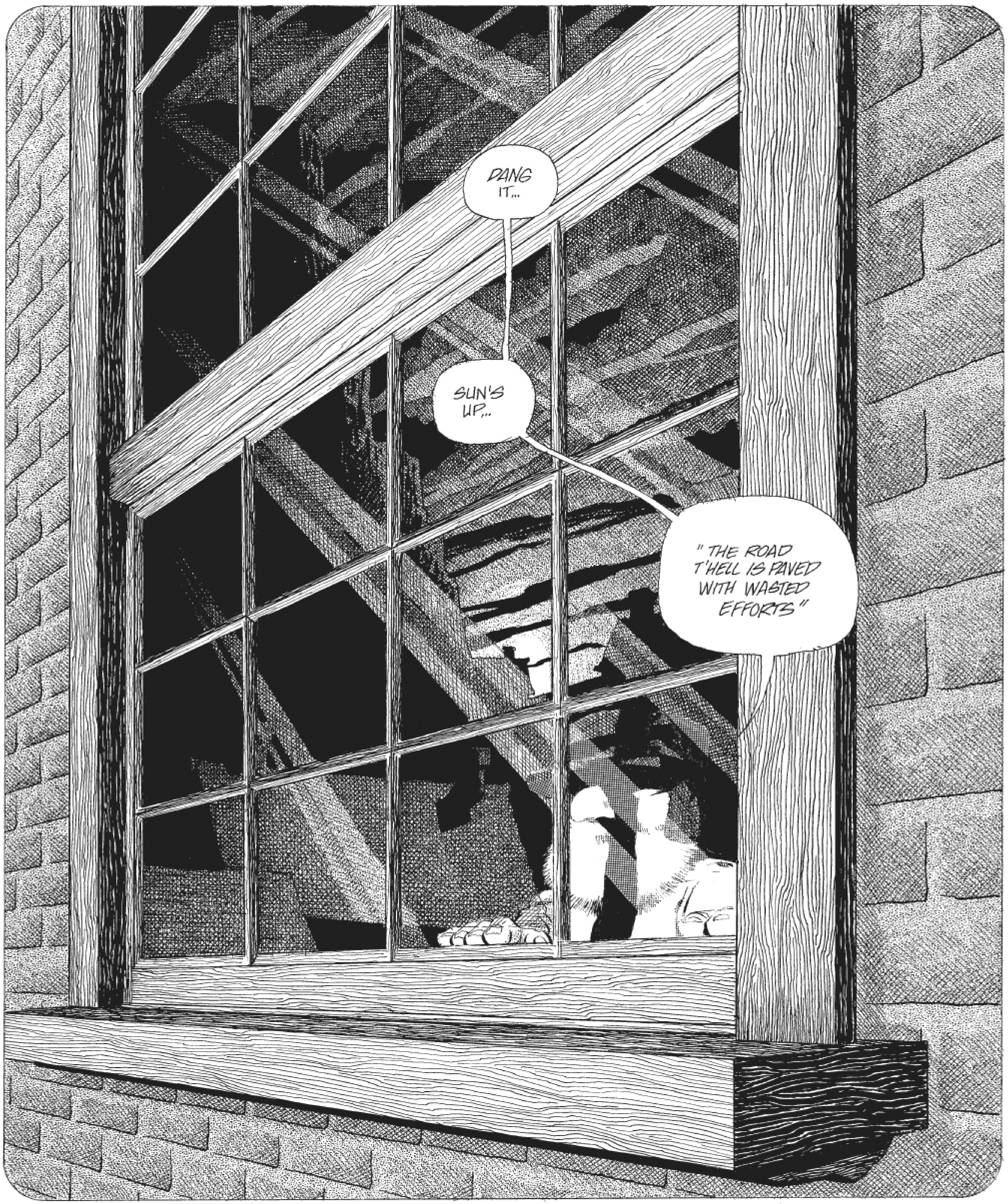

TWANG
OP
TWANG
OKEY-DOKEY ...
THAT DOES IT...
BEAR!
WHAD ARE YOU DOI'G?


I'M LEAVING-- I, LIKE, RESIGN I'M, WADDAYA CALL, DONE...
WADE A BIDDIT WADE A BIDDIT
NAW-- YOU DON'T NEED WADDAYACALL GUARDS ANYWAY EVERYBODY'S LIKE LEFT THE CITY,...
BEAR! WADE!
OB ALL NA...
BEAR!

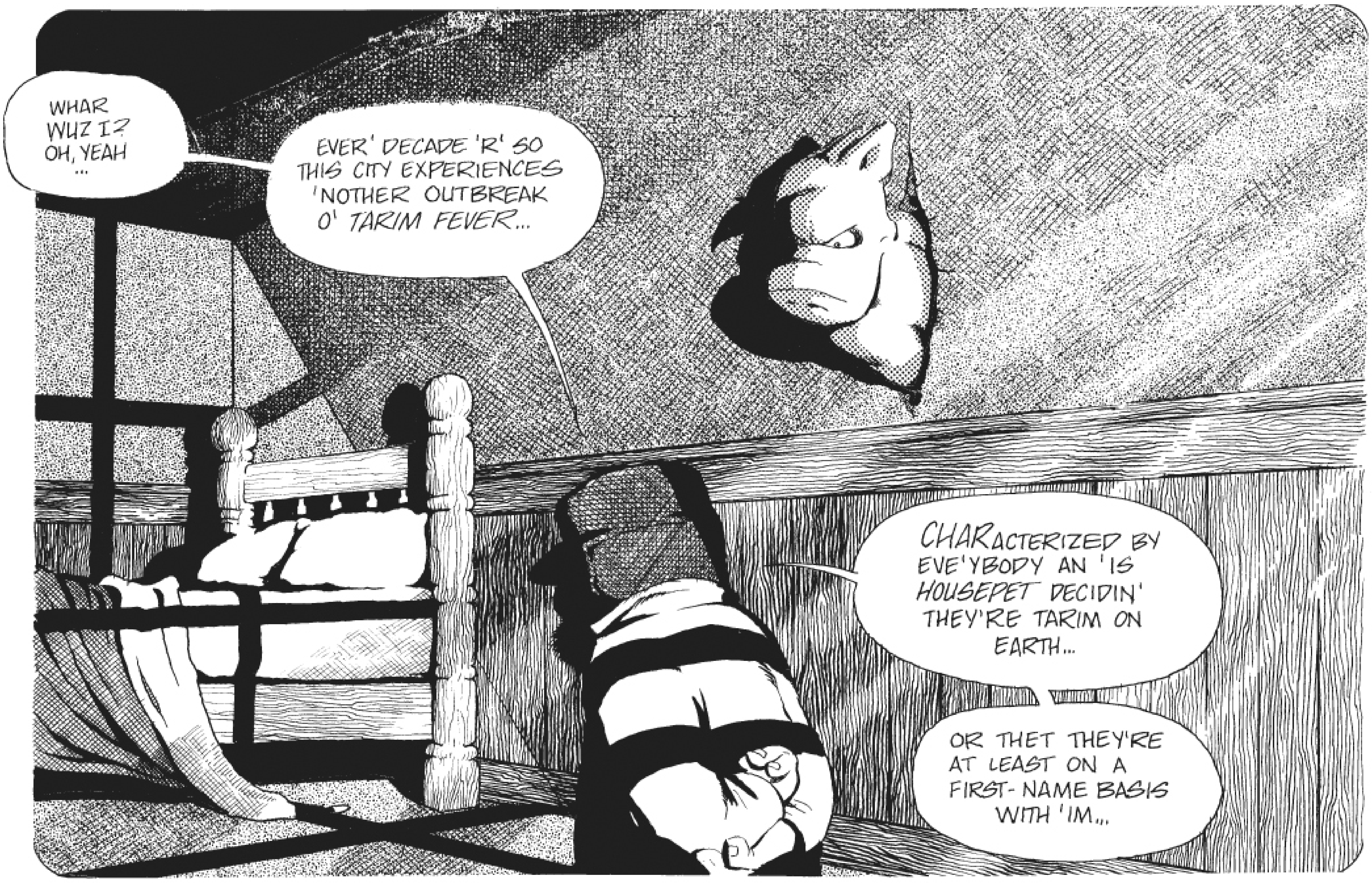

IT'S SO HARD TO FIND GOOD HELP...
WOULDN'T YOU SAY?
ALL YOU ASK IS THAT THEY GET UP AT ANY HOUR OF THE *NIGHT* TO CATER TO YOUR EVERY WHIM...
AND THEY START FEELING LIKE THEY'RE OPPRESSED
I'M A FEELING A LITTLE OPPRESSED A MYSELF
I'M A USETA RUN NEWA SEPRA
AN' NOW I'M A NOTHING BUT A LORDA JULIUS LIKE-A-LOOK
HEY, *LIKE-A-LOOK*, I HEAR THE PITTER-PATTER OF LITTLE FARMER FEET...
I'LL MEET YOU UNDER THE FRONT PORCH IN FIVE MINUTES
HOKAY-- WEAR A RED-A CARNATION SO I KNOW I'M YOU...

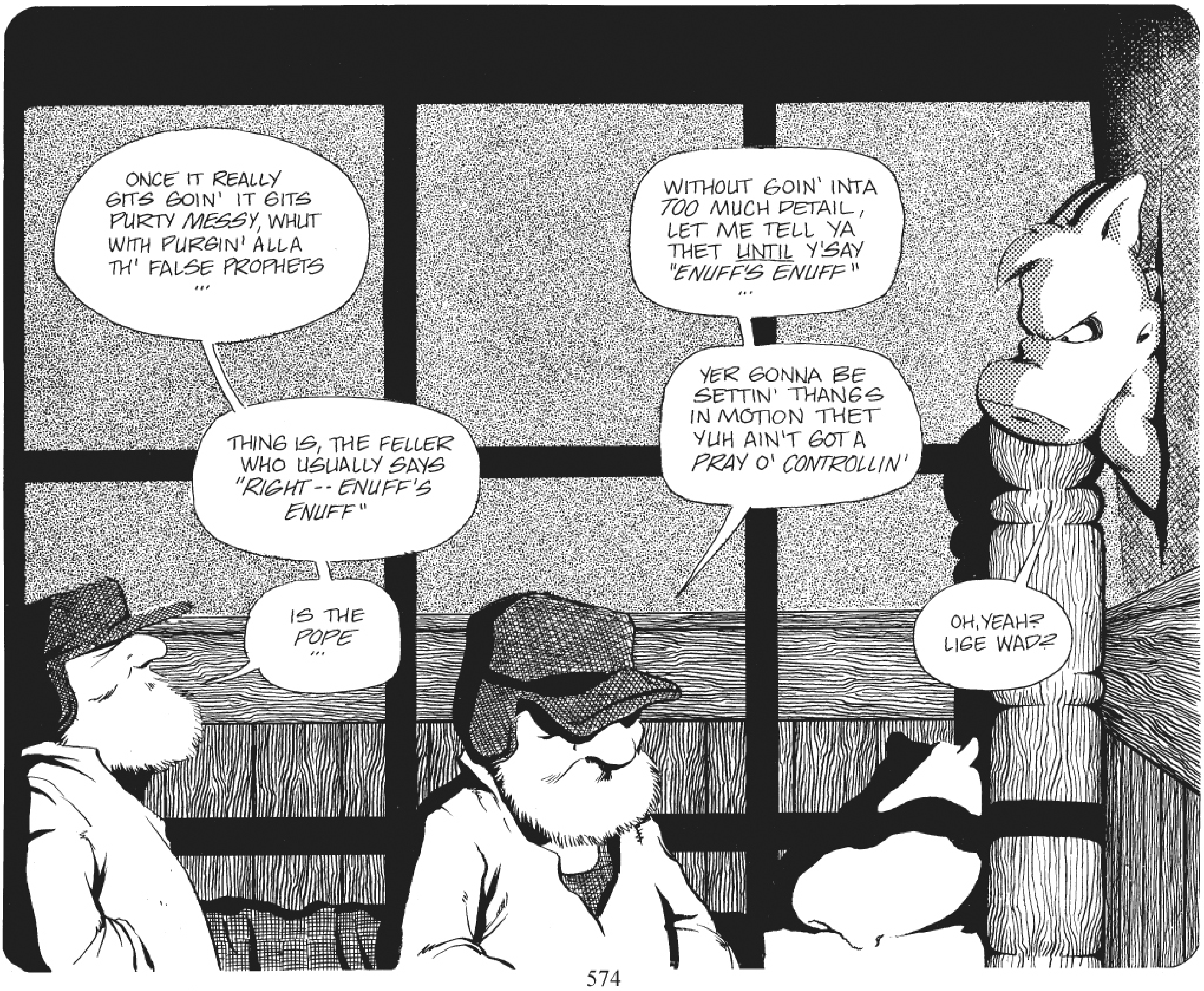

SLAM
SLAM
SLAM
BEAR!
NOW LIKE I WUZ *SAYIN'* ...

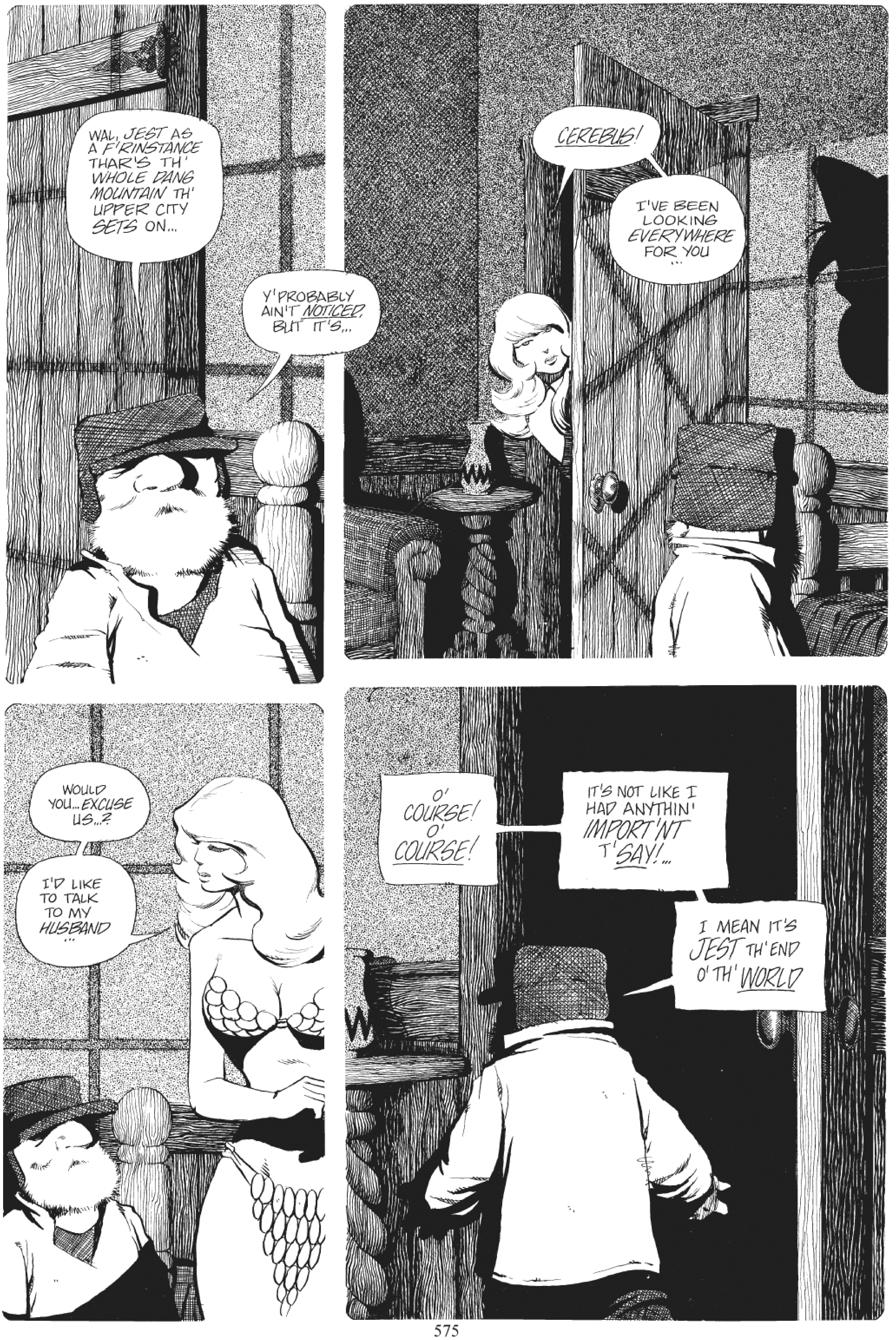
NEXT: MEANWHILE, BACK AT THE STORY-LINE...

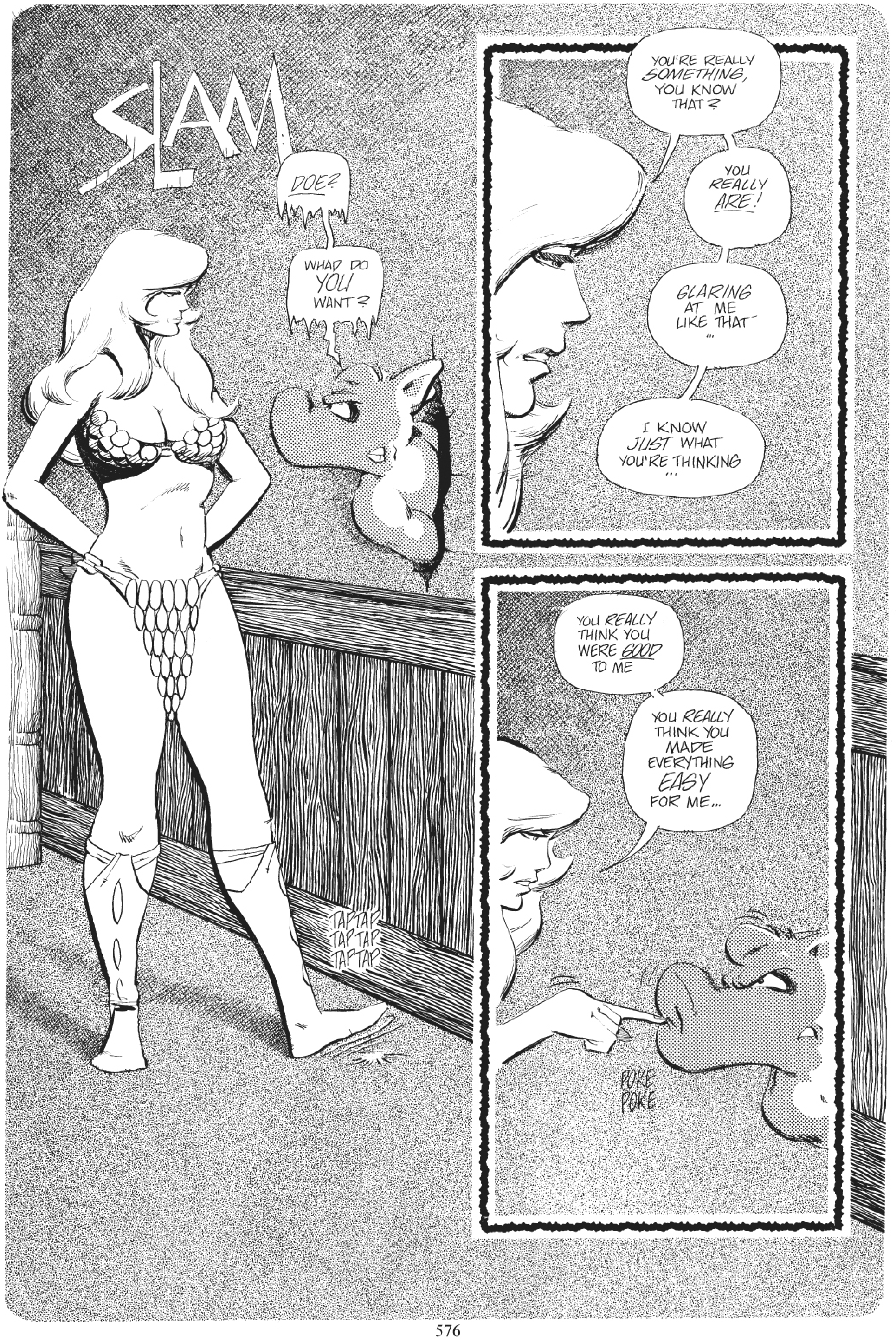

DANG IT...
SUN'S UP...
"THE ROAD T'HELL IS PAVED WITH WASTED EFFORTS"

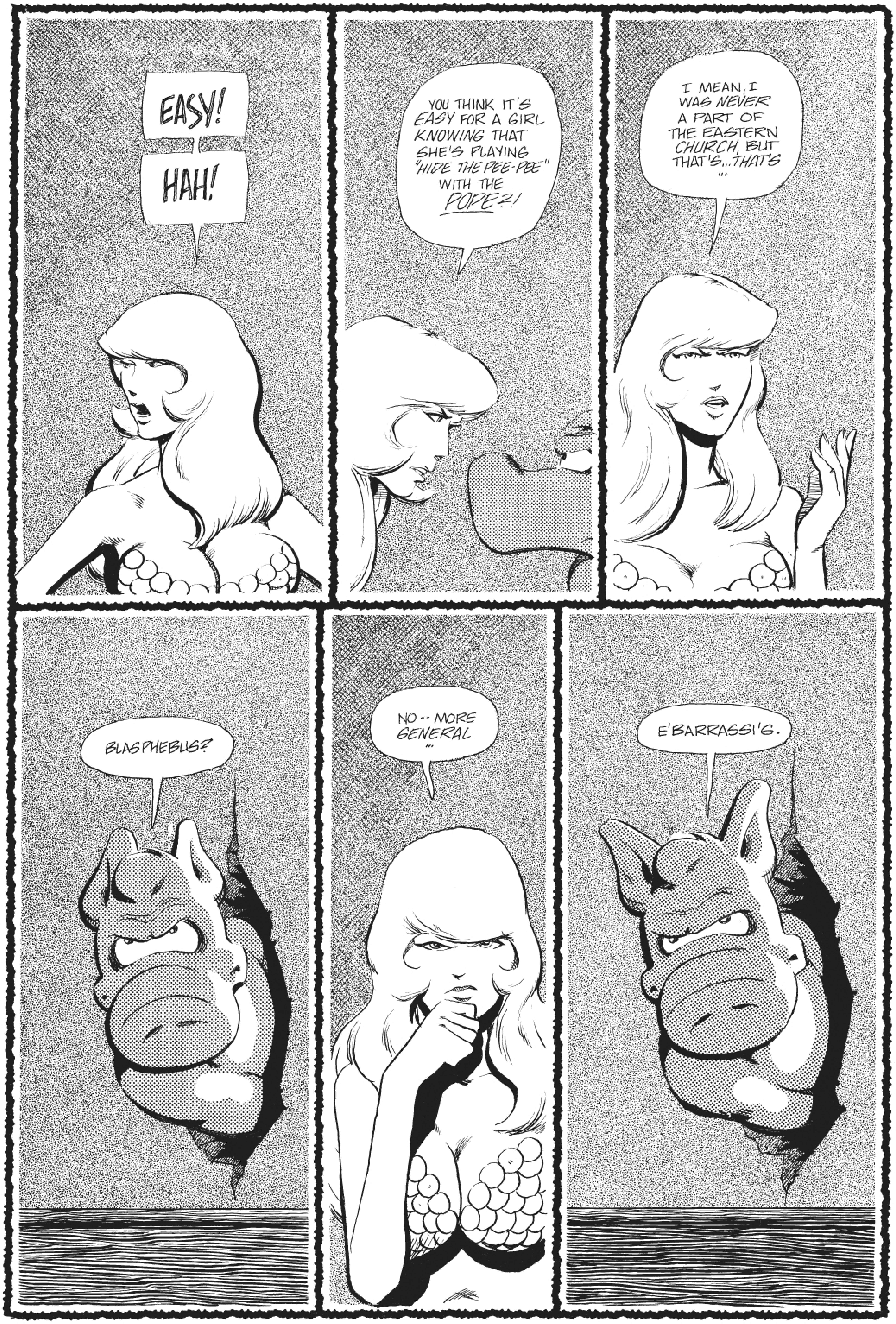
CAUSALITY CASUALTY

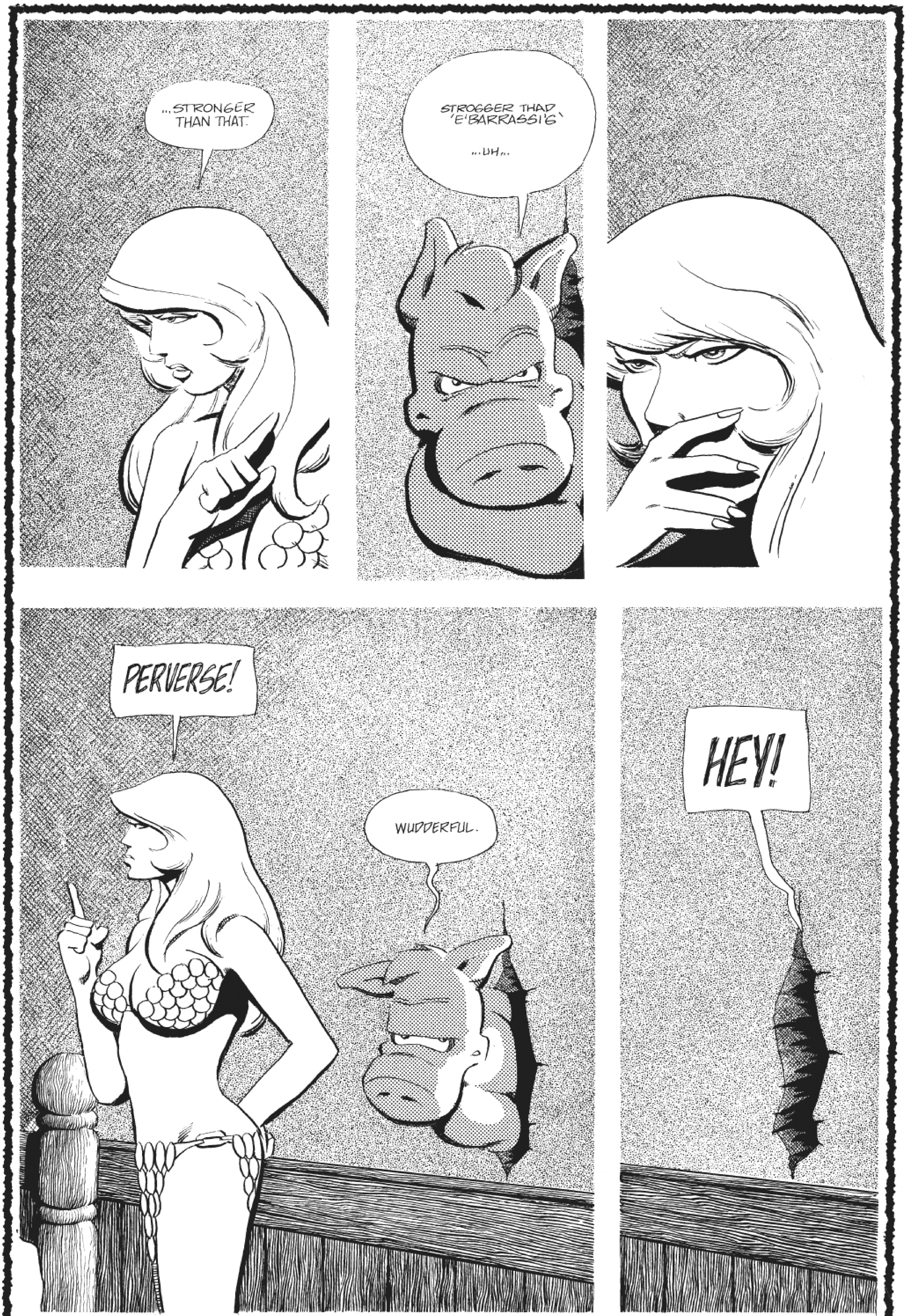

WHAR WUZ I? OH, YEAH ...
EVER' DECADE 'R' SO THIS CITY EXPERIENCES 'NOTHER OUTBREAK O' TARIM FEVER...
CHARACTERIZED BY EVE'YBODY AN' 'IS HOUSEPET DECIDIN' THEY'RE TARIM ON EARTH...
OR THET THEY'RE AT LEAST ON A FIRST-NAME BASIS WITH 'IM...

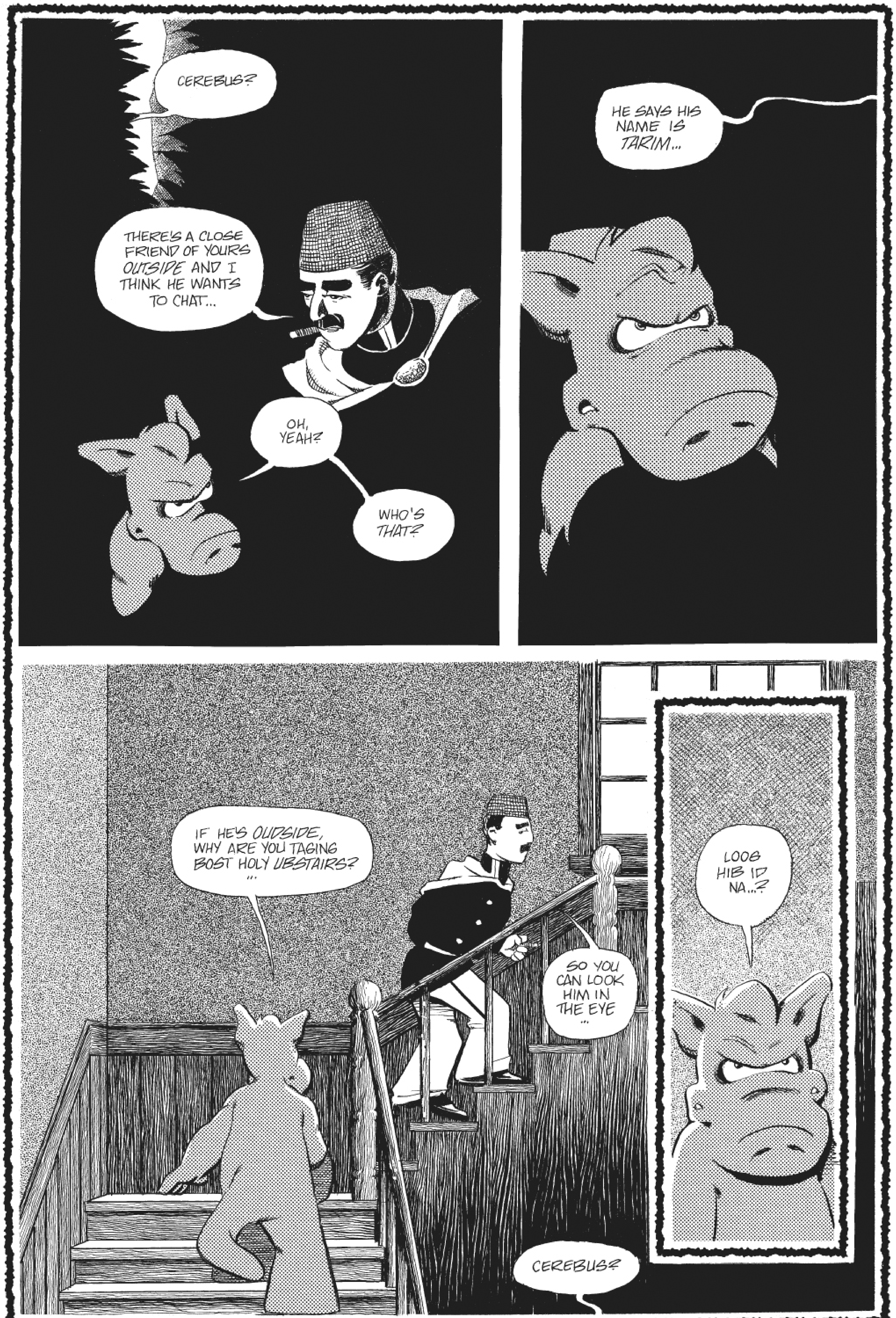

ONCE IT REALLY GITS GOIN' IT GITS PURTY MESSY, WHUT WITH PURGIN' ALLA TH' FALSE PROPHETS ...
THING IS, THE FELLER WHO USUALLY SAYS "RIGHT -- ENUFF'S ENUFF"
IS THE POPE ...
WITHOUT GOIN' INTA TOO MUCH DETAIL, LET ME TELL YA THET UNTIL Y'SAY "ENUFF'S ENUFF" ...
YER GONNA BE SETTIN' THANGS IN MOTION THET YUH AIN'T GOT A PRAY O' CONTROLLIN'
OH, YEAH? LIGE WAD?

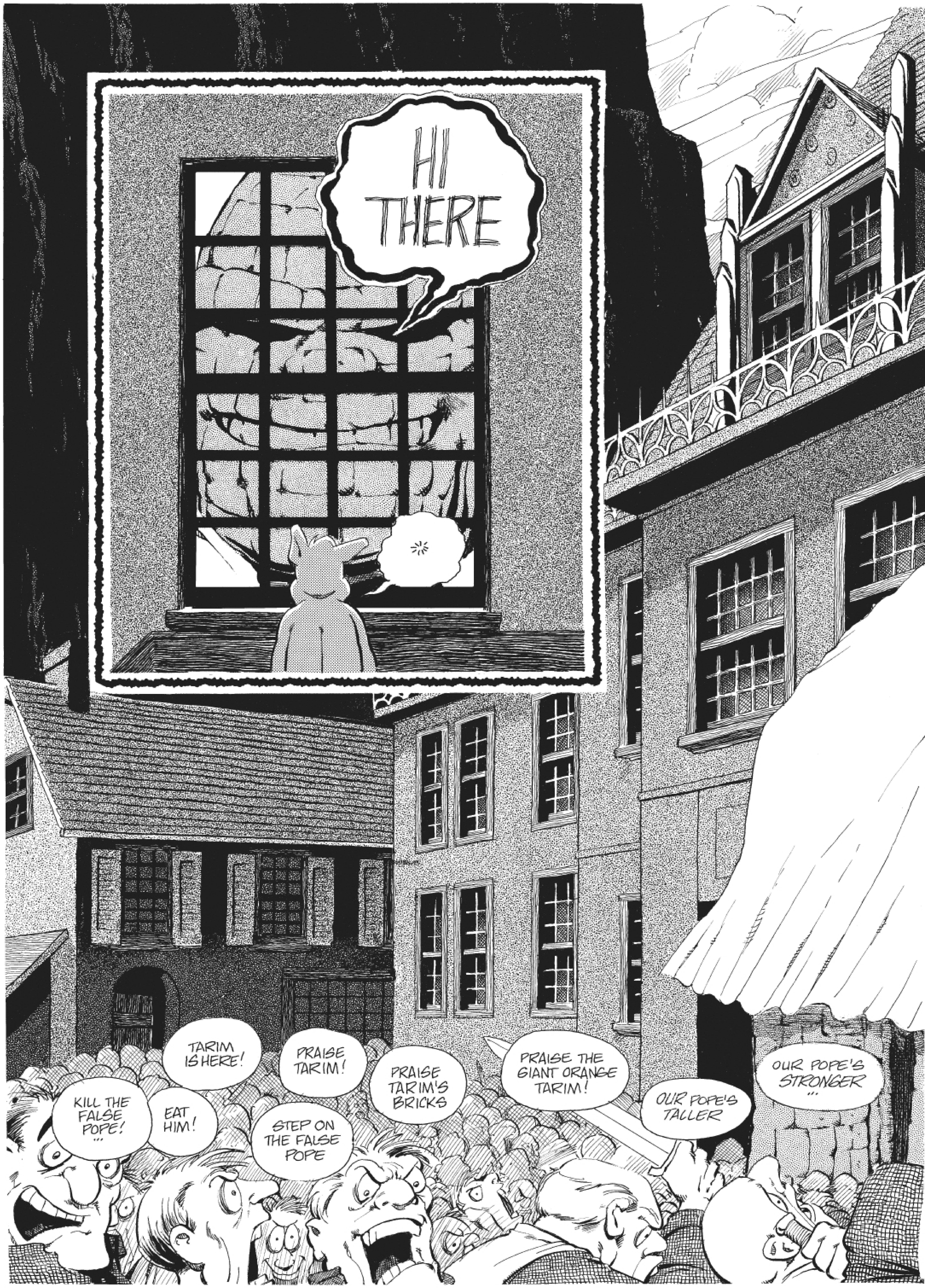

WAL, JEST AS A F'RINSTANCE THAR'S TH' WHOLE DANG MOUNTAIN TH' UPPER CITY SETS ON...
Y'PROBABLY AIN'T NOTICED, BUT IT'S...
CEREBUS!
I'VE BEEN LOOKING EVERYWHERE FOR YOU ...
WOULD YOU... EXCUSE US...?
I'D LIKE TO TALK TO MY HUSBAND ...
O' COURSE! O' COURSE!
IT'S NOT LIKE I HAD ANYTHIN' IMPORT'NT T'SAY!...
I MEAN IT'S JEST TH'END O'TH' WORLD

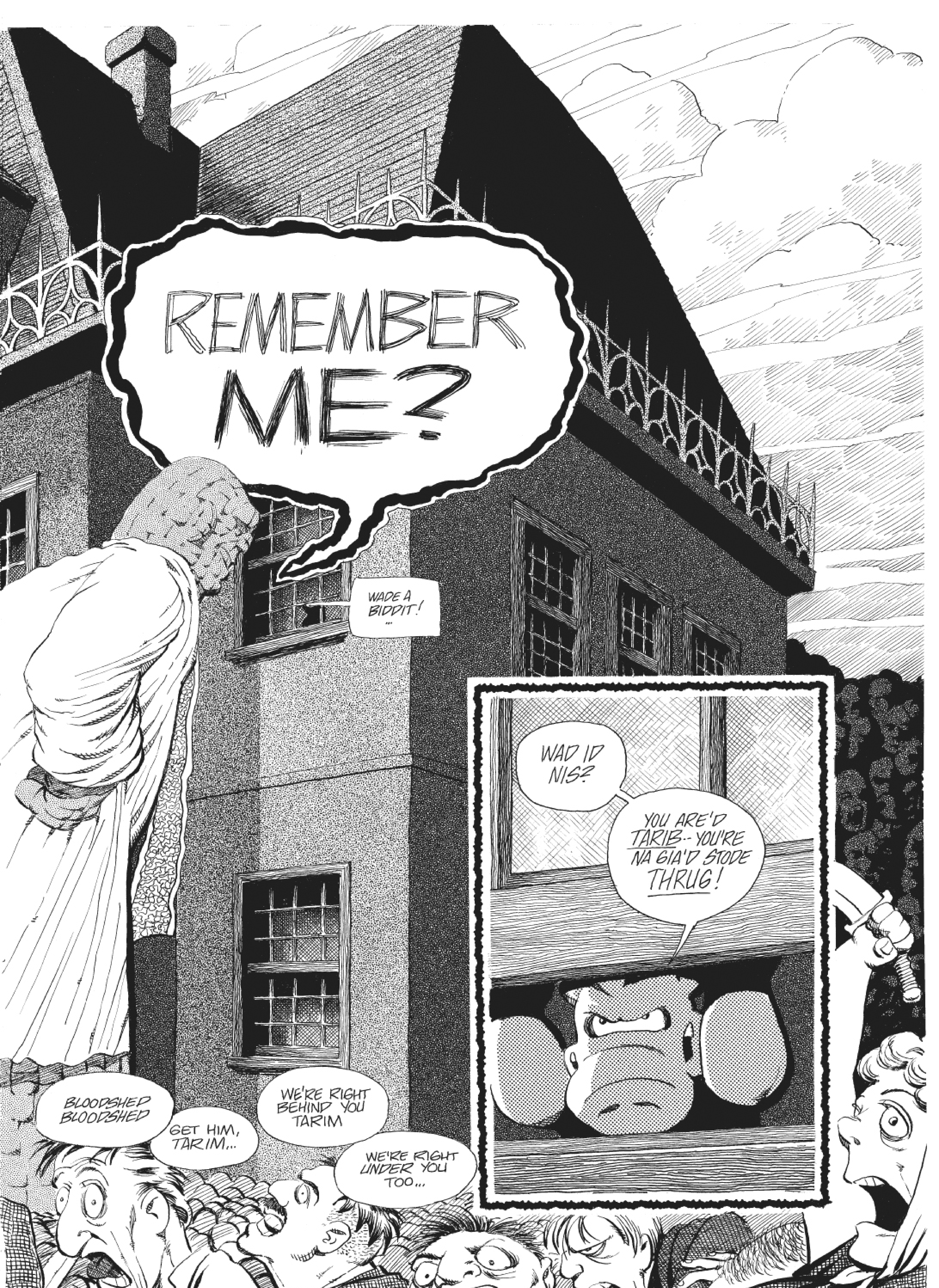

SLAM
DOE?
WHAD DO YOU WANT?
TAPTAP TAPTAP TAPTAP
YOU'RE REALLY SOMETHING, YOU KNOW THAT?
YOU REALLY ARE!
GLARING AT ME LIKE THAT...
I KNOW JUST WHAT YOU'RE THINKING...
YOU REALLY THINK YOU WERE GOOD TO ME
YOU REALLY THINK YOU MADE EVERYTHING EASY FOR ME...
POKE POKE

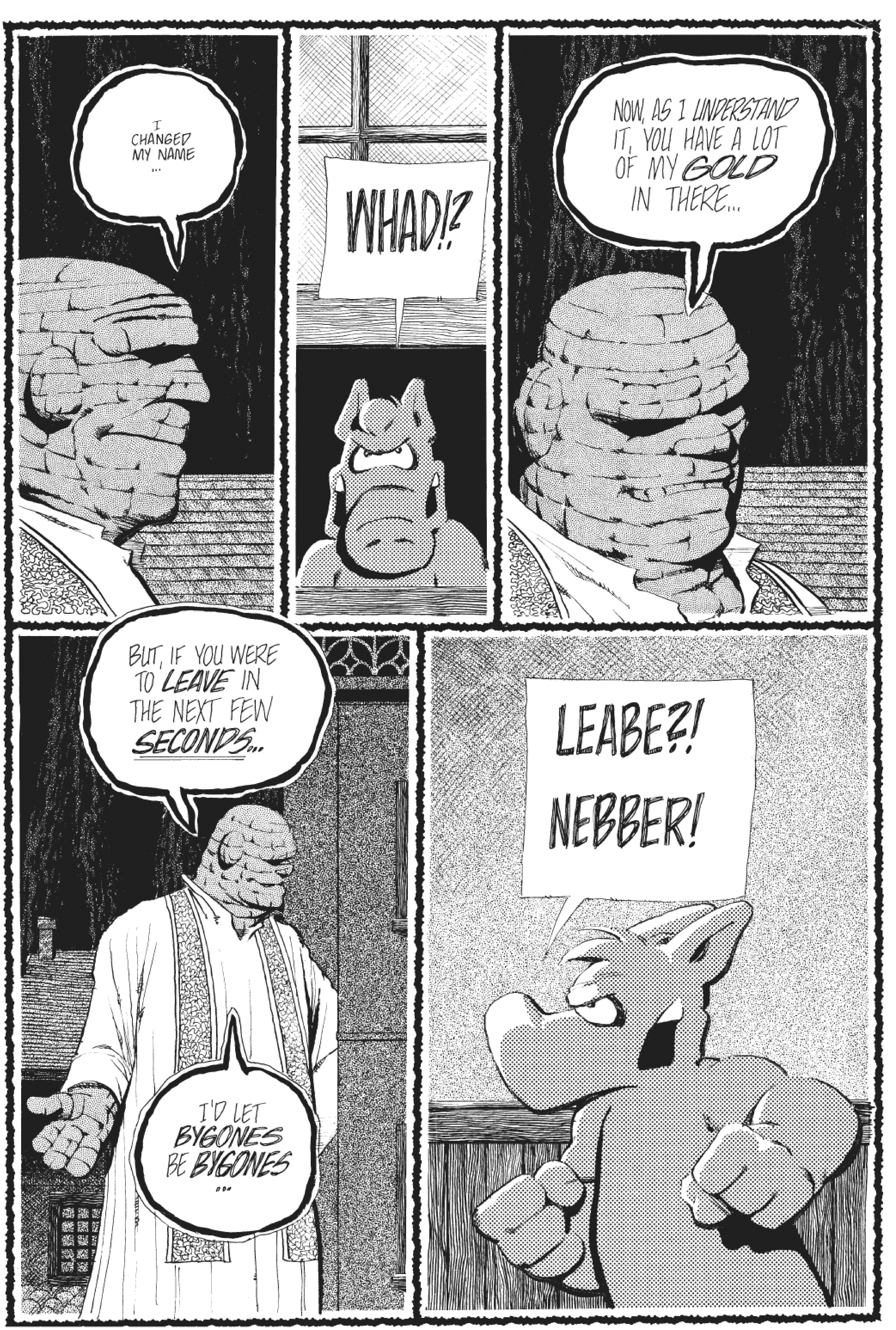

EASY!
HAH!
YOU THINK IT'S *EASY* FOR A GIRL *KNOWING* THAT SHE'S PLAYING *"HIDE THE PEE-PEE"* WITH THE *POPE*?!
I MEAN, I WAS *NEVER* A PART OF THE EASTERN *CHURCH*, BUT THAT'S... THAT'S ...
BLASPHEBUS?
NO -- MORE *GENERAL* ...
E'BARRASSI'G.

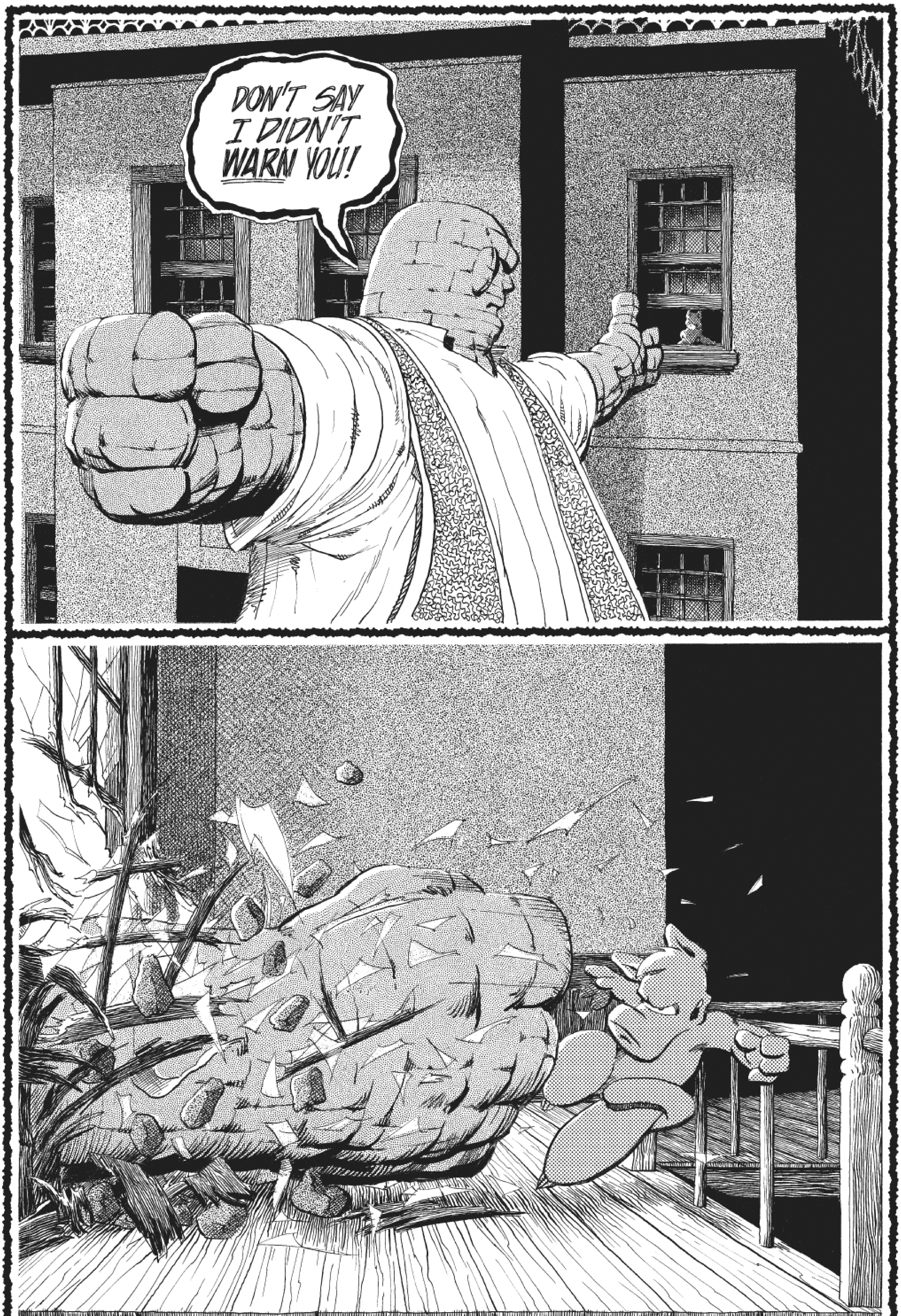

...STRONGER THAN THAT.
STROGGER THAD 'E'BARRASSI'G`
...UH...
PERVERSE!
WUDDERFUL.
HEY!

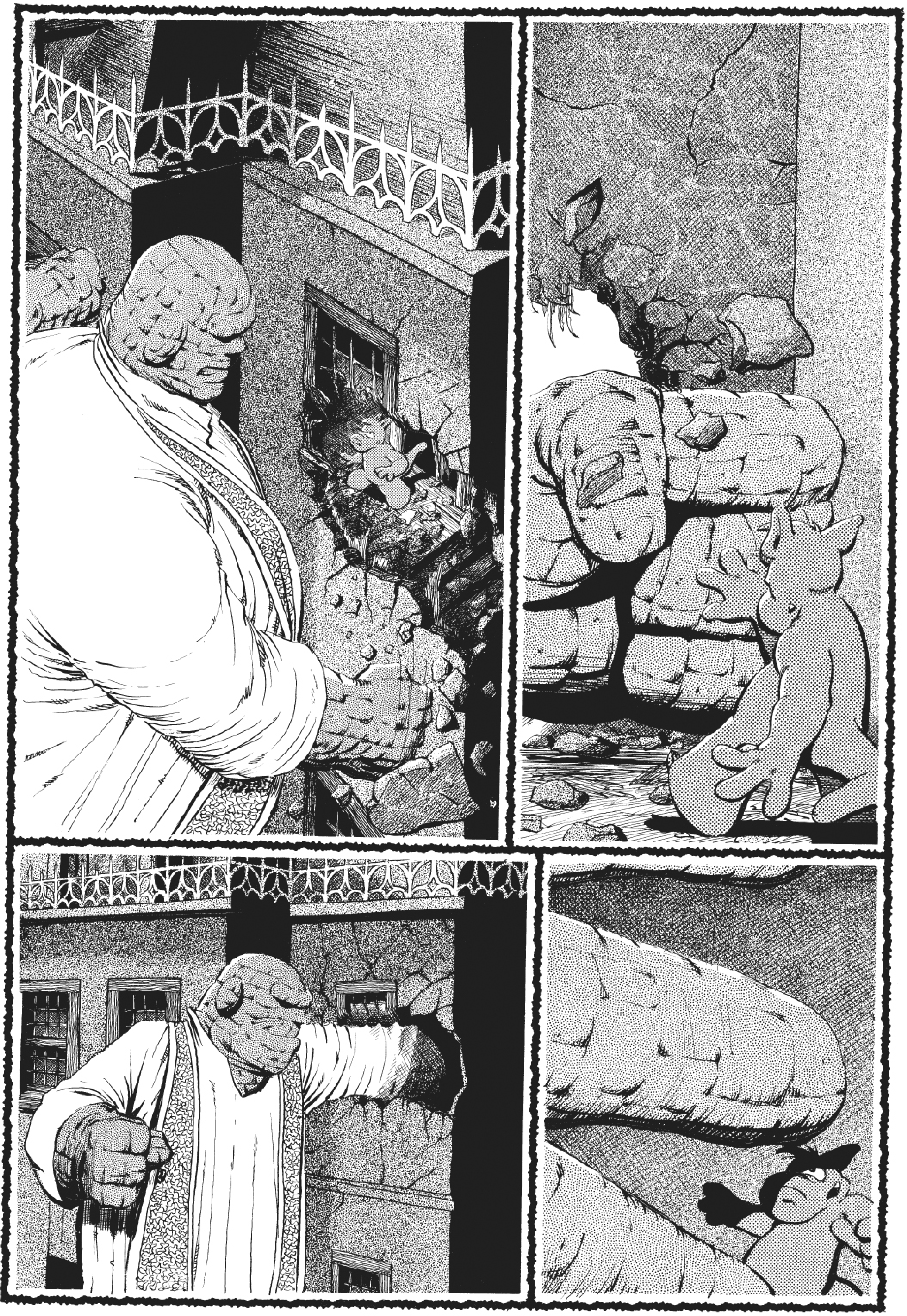

CEREBUS?
THERE'S A CLOSE FRIEND OF YOURS OUTSIDE AND I THINK HE WANTS TO CHAT...
OH, YEAH?
WHO'S THAT?
HE SAYS HIS NAME IS TARIM...
IF HE'S OUDSIDE, WHY ARE YOU TAGING BOST HOLY UBSTAIRS? ...
SO YOU CAN LOOK HIM IN THE EYE ...
LOOG HIB ID NA...?
CEREBUS?

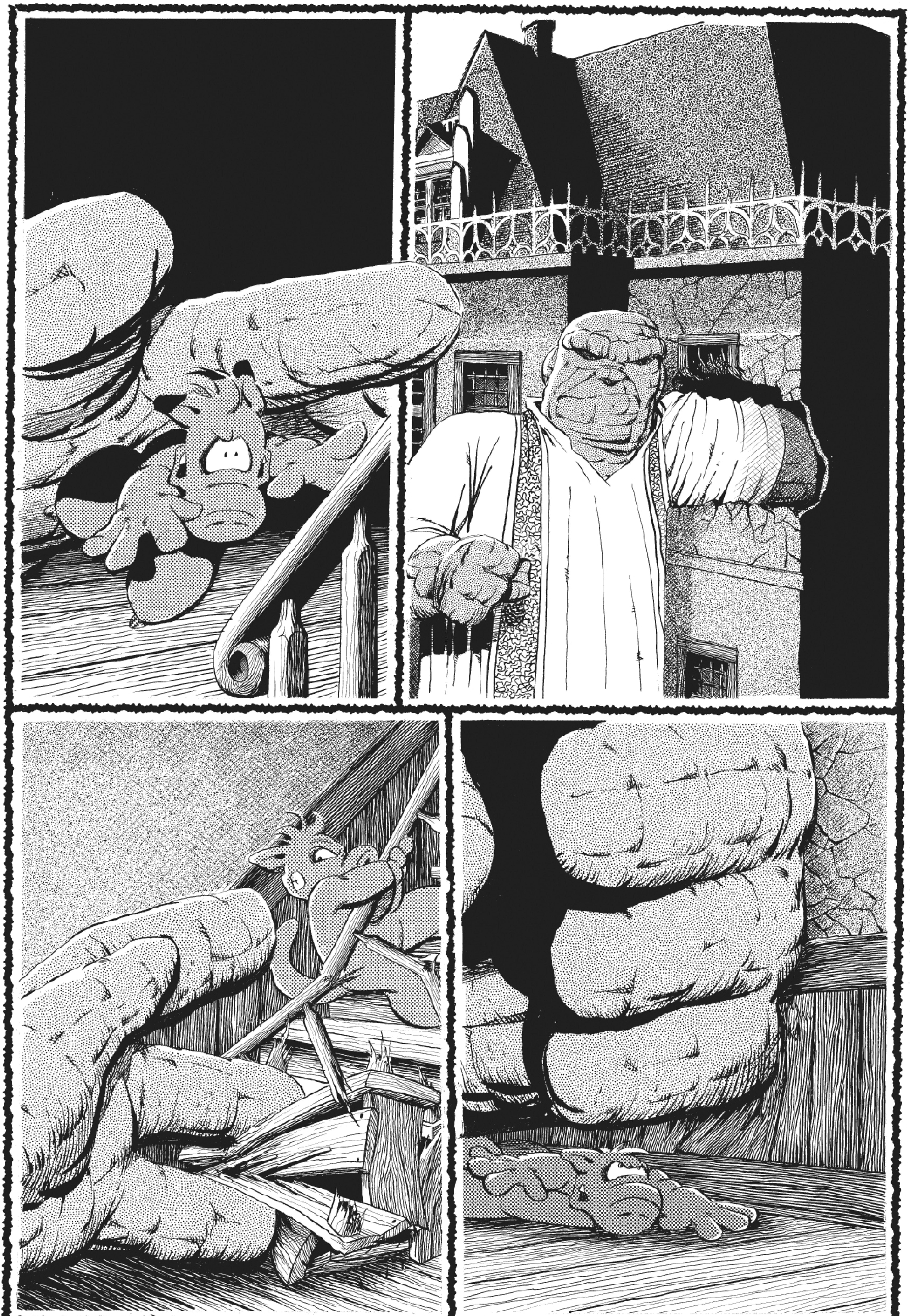

HI THERE
KILL THE FALSE POPE! ...
TARIM IS HERE!
EAT HIM!
PRAISE TARIM!
STEP ON THE FALSE POPE
PRAISE TARIM'S BRICKS
PRAISE THE GIANT ORANGE TARIM!
OUR POPE'S TALLER
OUR POPE'S STRONGER ...

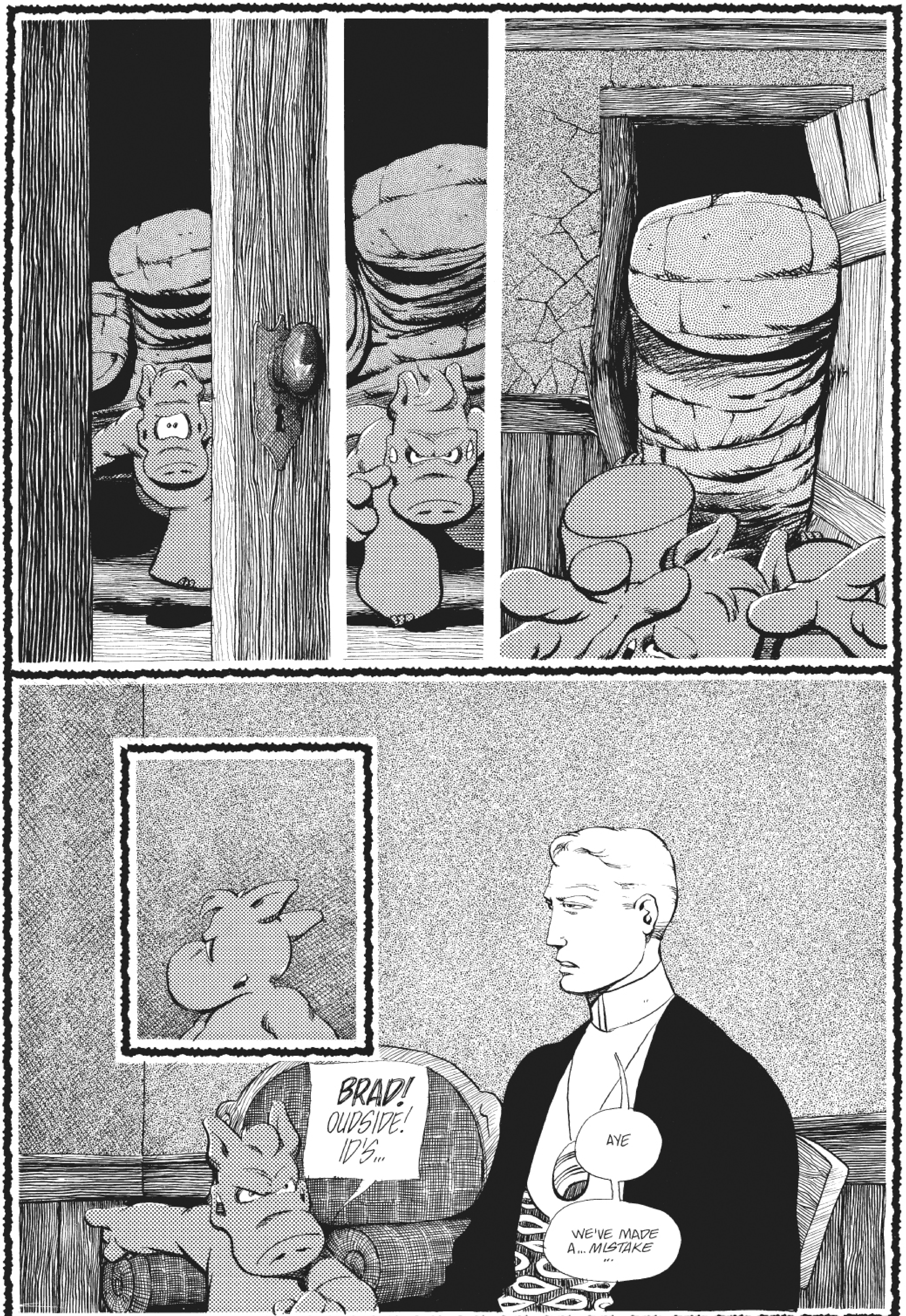

REMEMBER ME?
WADE A BIDDIT! ...
WAD ID NIS?
YOU ARE'D TARIB-- YOU'RE NA GIA'D STODE THRUG!
BLOODSHED BLOODSHED
GET HIM, TARIM...
WE'RE RIGHT BEHIND YOU TARIM
WE'RE RIGHT UNDER YOU TOO...

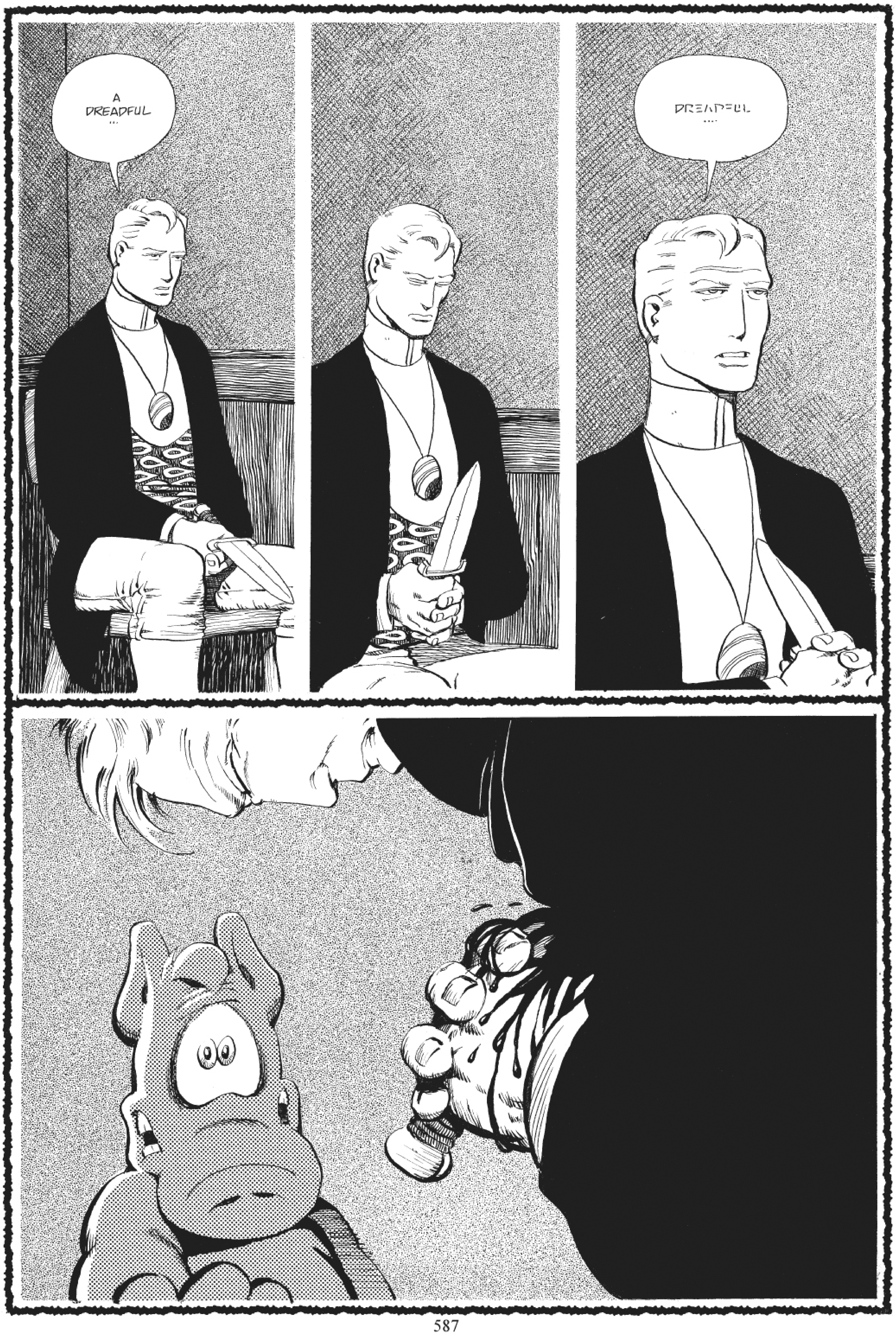

I CHANGED MY NAME ...
WHAD!?
NOW, AS I UNDERSTAND IT, YOU HAVE A LOT OF MY GOLD IN THERE...
BUT, IF YOU WERE TO LEAVE IN THE NEXT FEW SECONDS...
I'D LET BYGONES BE BYGONES ...
LEABE?! NEBBER!

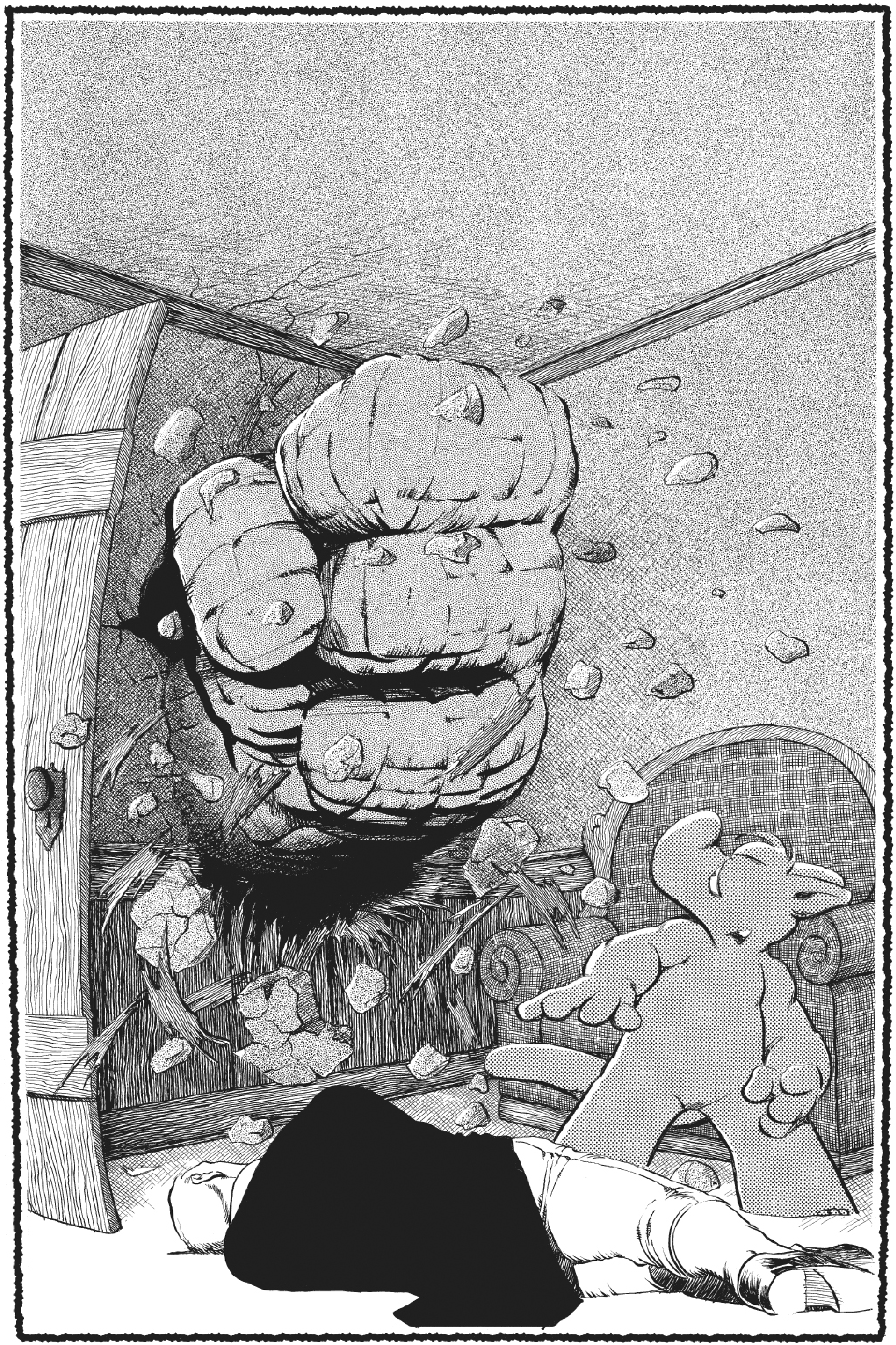

DON'T SAY I DIDN'T WARN YOU!

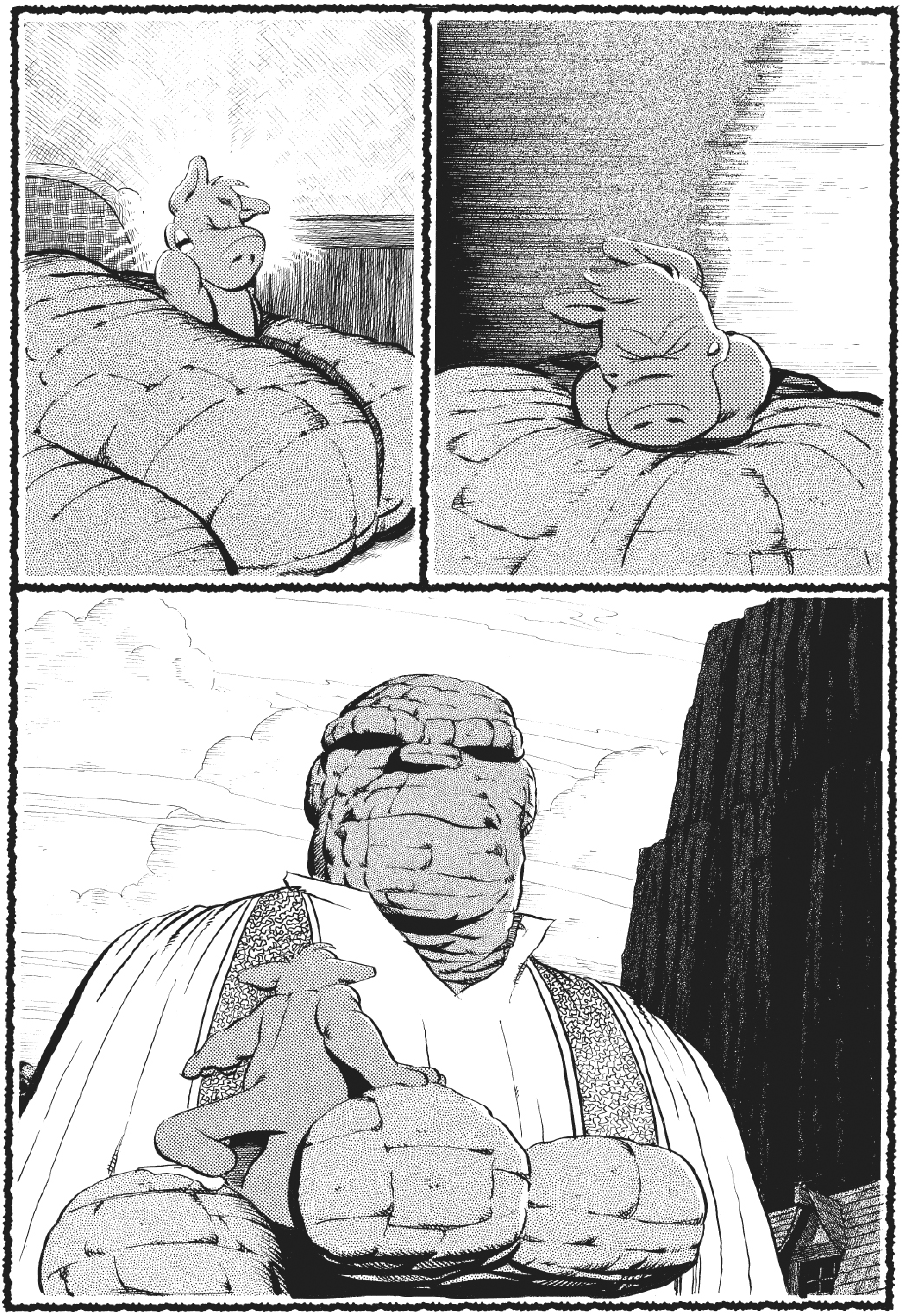


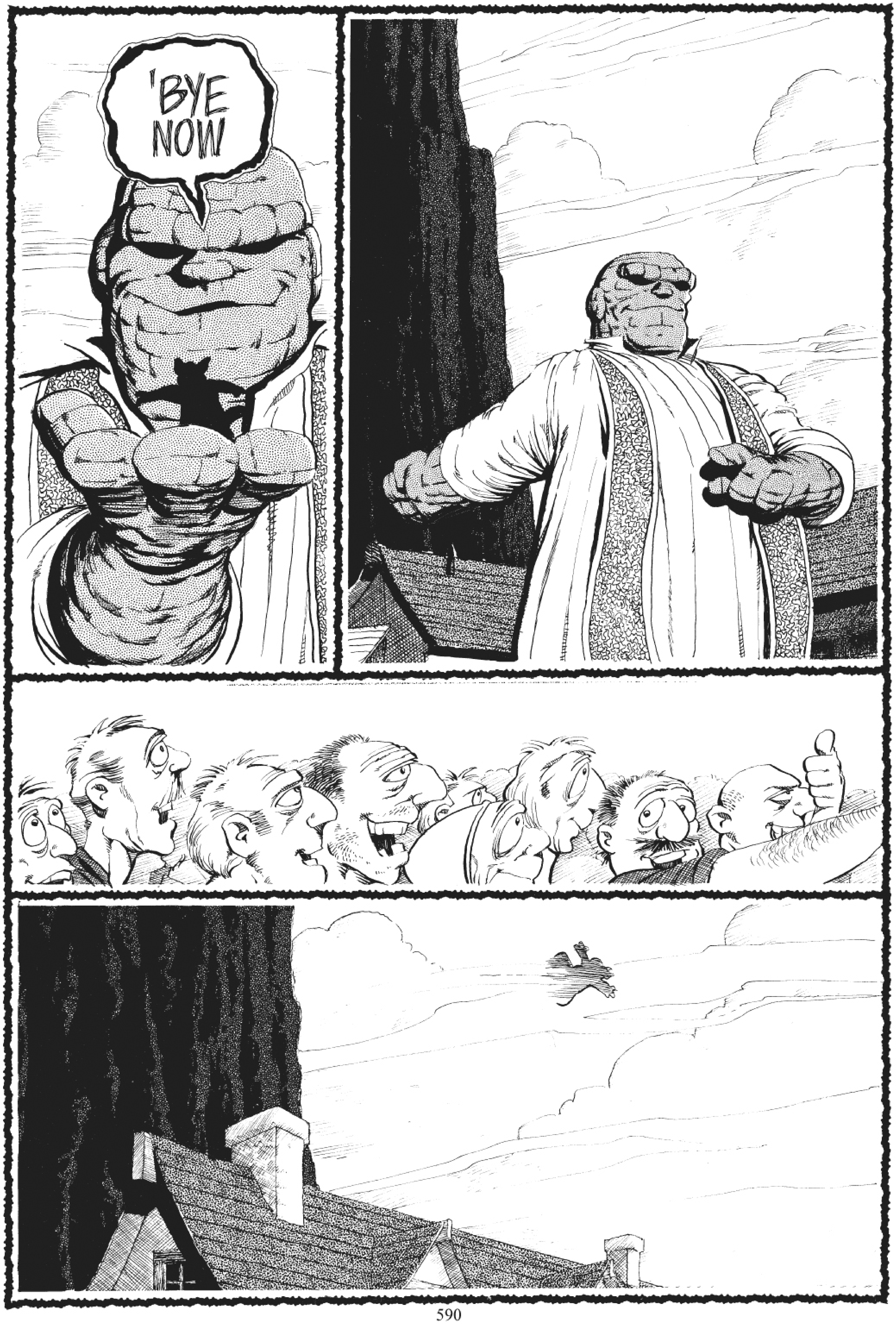


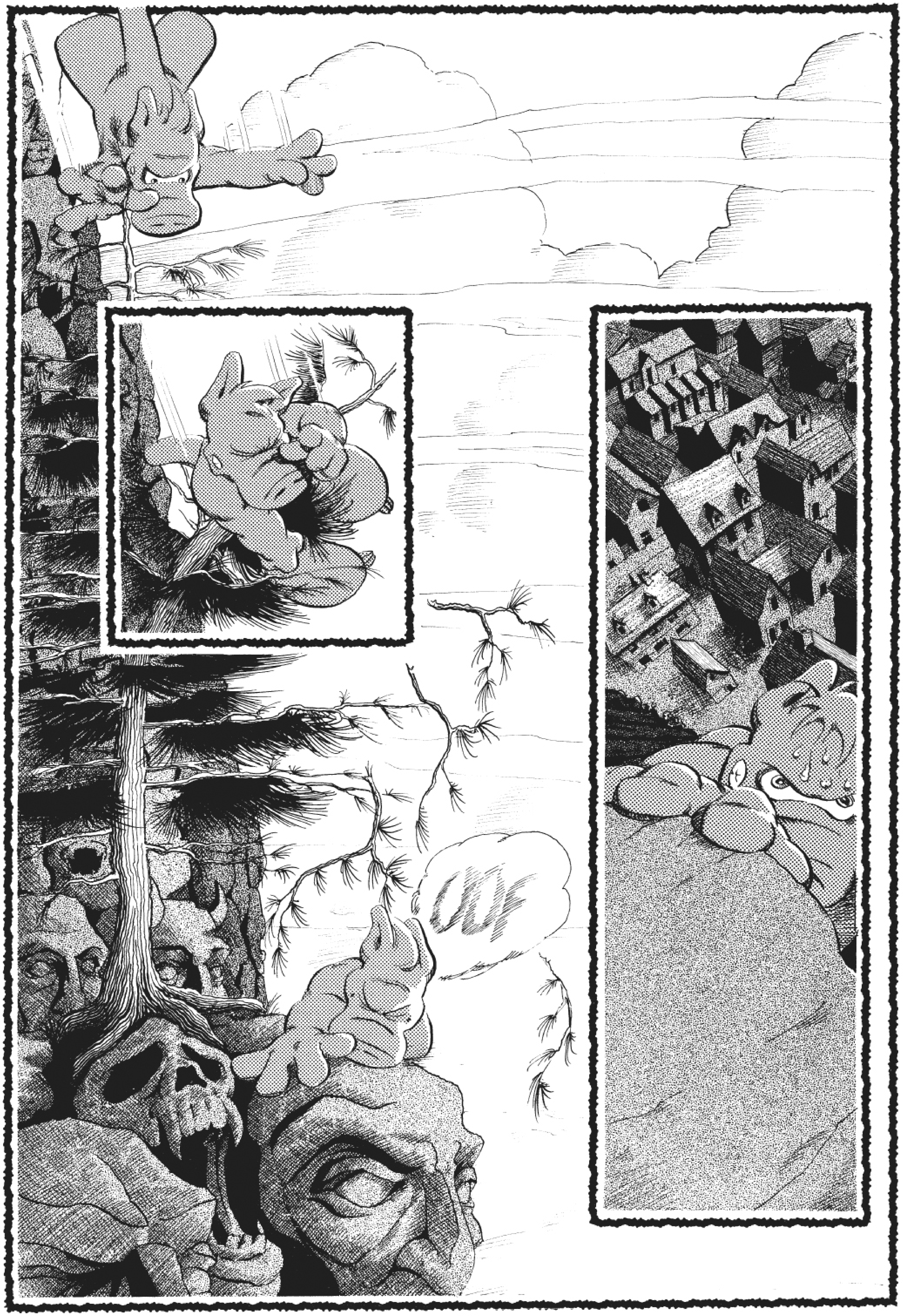

BRAD! OUDSIDE! ID'S...
AYE
WE'VE MADE A... MISTAKE ...

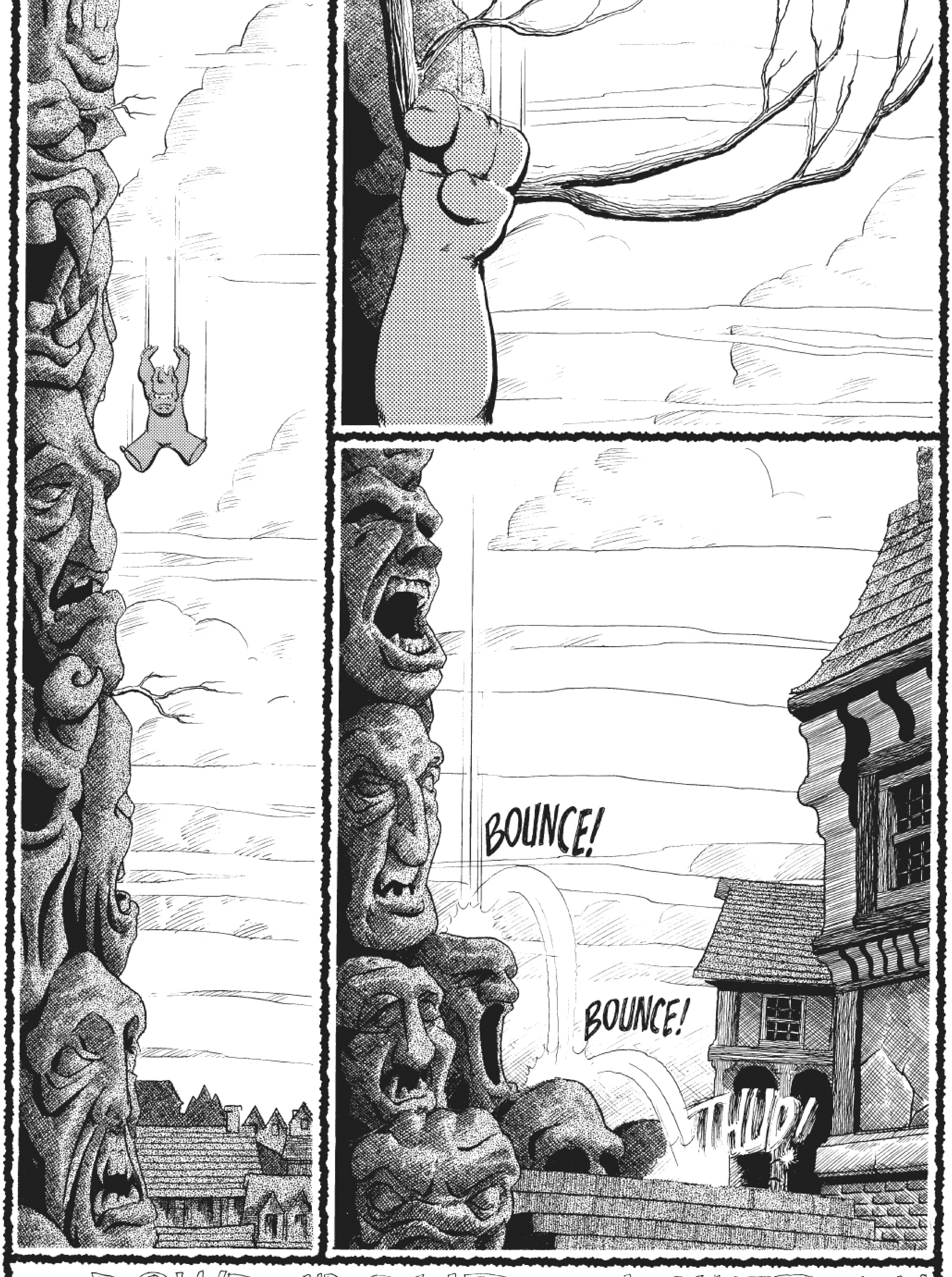

A DREADFUL ...
DREADFUL ....






'BYE NOW


OUF


BOUNCE!
BOUNCE!
THUD!
DEXD: DOWD A'D OUD ID NA LOWER CIDY

Digital restoration by Living the Line, San Diego, CA:
Sean Michael Robinson and Mara Sedlins

Original art in The Cerebus Archive scanned by Dave Sim
Photographic negative materials scanned by Karen Funk with John Funk

2,300 WORDS ON THE RESTORED CHURCH & STATE I

Sean Michael Robinson

> *The book which the reader has before him at this moment is, from one end to the other, in its entirety and details ... a progress from evil to good, from injustice to justice, from falsehood to truth, from night to day, from appetite to conscience, from corruption to life; from bestiality to duty, from hell to heaven, from nothingness to God. The starting point: matter, destination: the soul. The hydra at the beginning, the angel at the end.*
>
> – *Victor Hugo*, Les Miserables

There was a time when it seemed possible that comics, little packets of ink on paper, could be the true inheritors of ambitious serial storytelling—could carry the mantle of the sprawling, messy, glorious serial novels of the past, could inspire the devotion that those works did, the kind of devotion that, in 1841, on the eve of the publication of the final installment of *The Old Curiosity Shop*, caused more than 6,000 New Yorkers desperate to find the fate of Little Nell to crowd the wharf where the shipment from London was due to arrive.

Now, it seems clear, that mantle has been passed on—to television, of all media. Something that would have been unthinkable just two decades ago now seems like an historical inevitability. Comics, meanwhile, declined the opportunity. Maybe it was the structural problems with the industry, the lack of distribution channels. Maybe it was the shortsightedness, the contempt with which the creators of the material were treated by the monied interests. Maybe it was just a lack of ambition.

But we consider an exception.

There's never been a work of art quite like *Cerebus the Aardvark*.

More relevant to the task at hand, there's never been anything quite like *Church & State*, the under-two-covers epic that represents 1/5th of the entire 26-year, 6000+ page saga.

Like many an enthusiast before me, I've spent a fair amount of time trying to describe *Church & State* and its qualities to the deprived, the abstinent, the uninitiated. "It's like, you know, a really dense serial novel," I might start. "The kind that rambles from incident to incident, before somehow cohering into something new. Made on a tight-rope, while the public watches below. Politics and power. Religion and revolution. Pain and pleasure and persuasion. A deep and abiding enthusiasm for *Looney Tunes* and *Duck Soup* and..."

So, like, *David Copperfield* meets *A Tale of Two Cities*, then? Or *Vanity Fair*? *Les Miserables*?

"Sure, sure, exactly like *Les Miserables*... if you replace France with a sword-and-sorcery parody world that slowly morphs into an early-industrial environment with fantastical elements remaining as mystical and/or spiritual projections. And, you know, if Jean Valjean was a pathologically self-interested, genocidal three-foot tall talking aardvark. So yes, exactly like *Les Miserables*."

It's one thing to describe the work, but in endeavoring to invoke its effect on its audience... I'm left with little more than a shopping list of enthusiastic sentence fragments rather than anything definitive.

The work that would become *Church & State* was begun in May of 1983, right around author Dave Sim's 27th birthday. Having recently completed his longest sustained narrative yet with *High Society*, serialized in issues 25 through 50 of the monthly *Cerebus the Aardvark*, Sim planned to spend a few issues with shorter, lighter, less intertwined stories. But after just a few issues, it became clear that he had actually embarked on another, even more ambitious, work.

Although not remotely similar in tone, the *Les Miserables* comparison isn't a lark. Like Hugo of the mid-1840s, Dave Sim of 1983 was an ambitious man in command of a diverse set of skills. Having written and drawn fifty issues of a riotously funny comic, and having essentially taught himself to draw in public, Sim emerges from these seven years of labor having incorporated his influences, pruned and plucked and blended and then reformed them to serve his purposes. The layout innovations of Krigstein, Steranko, Adams, and of Gene Day, his good friend and early mentor. The visual storytelling of Kurtzman, of Feiffer and Eisner. The drawing of Swan, of Adams, Drucker, Windsor-Smith. The rendering solutions of Williamson, Sienkiewicz, Jeff Jones. Unlike Hugo, who labored over *Les Miserables* in privacy for seventeen years before submitting it for publication, Sim's improvement and continually developing craft are on full display, the entirety of the work having been created in public, with no revisions after initial periodical publication.

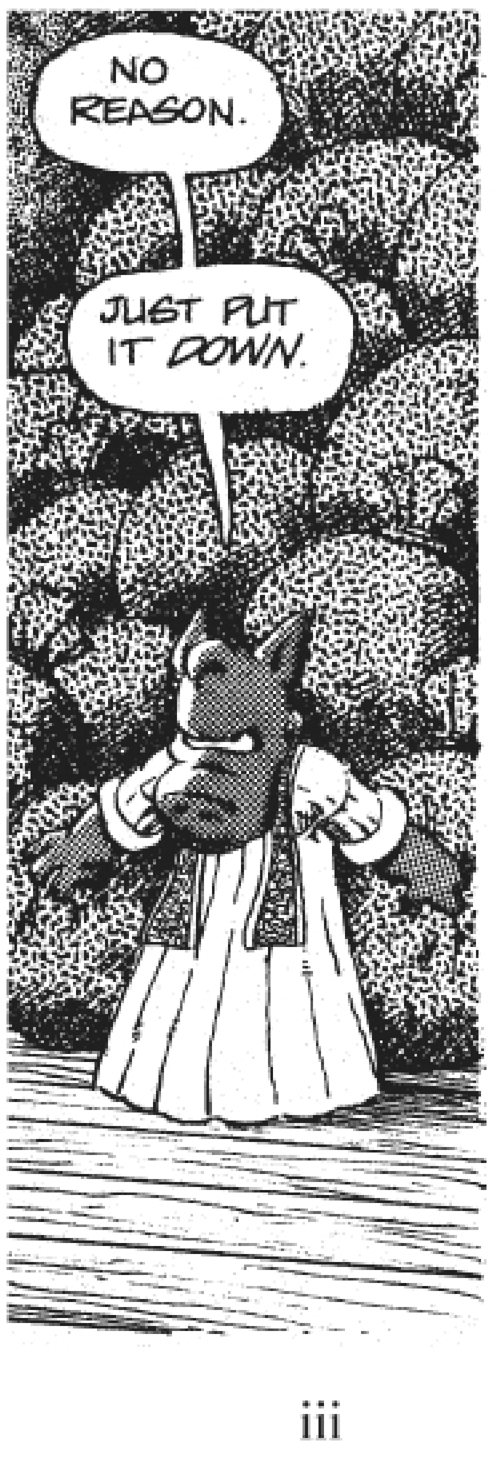
Similar to the magpie-like accrual of influences, the characters of *Church & State* are themselves an assemblage, gathered from sources fictional, historical, and personal. Weisshaupt bears some resemblance to George Washington, whom the historical Adam Weisshaupt is said to have replaced, according to discredited conspiracy theories. Red Sophia, who dates back to the third issue of *Cerebus*, began as a parody of Frank Thorne's metal-bikini-clad Red Sonja. Red Sophia's mother, Mrs. Henrot-Gutch, is brazenly appropriated from the Grandmother character in the U.K.'s venerable political/slice-of-life cartoon *Giles*. Countess Michelle borrows her physical characteristics from Karen McKiel, Aardvark-Vanaheim's office administrator during the run of *Church & State* (incidentally, McKiel also sometimes chipped in filling in blacks on the artwork.) Bear and Boobah both derive from acquaintances of Sim. And of course, the Roach continues his superheroic transformations/borrowings, most infamously as the "Wolveroach," who appeared solo on three consecutive *Cerebus* covers, while in the interior of the books remaining passed out upstairs. (Marvel Comics Group™, owner and *legal author* of Wolverine™, was not amused.)

It's at the halfway point where the book turns. Just as the narrative threads of the story have finally begun to converge – the disparate elements coming together to reveal something of the underlying structure – so too the formal elements of the book experience a radical departure.

Enter Gerhard.

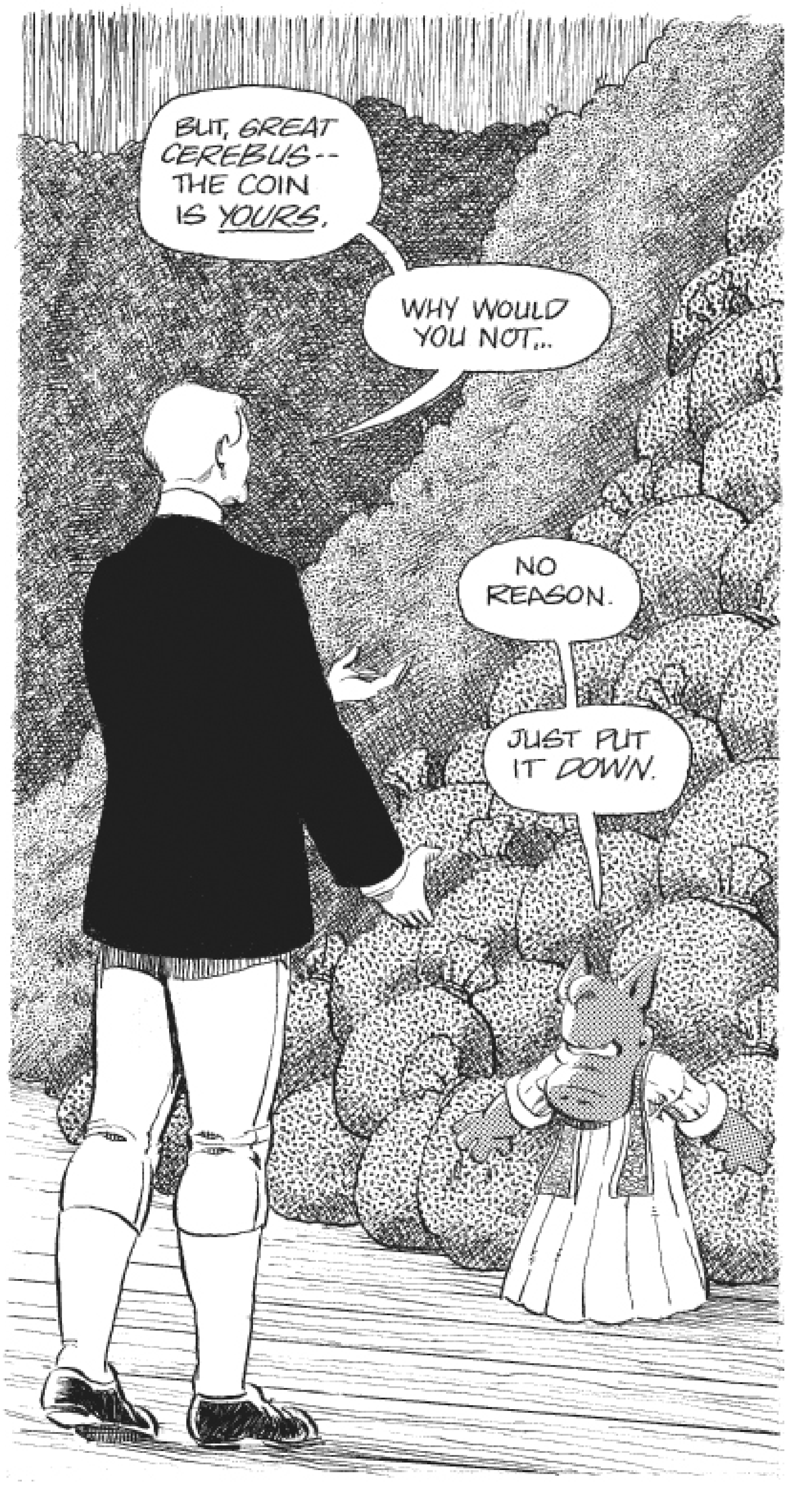
Like Sim, a largely self-taught artist, Gerhard's "timely arrival" forever changed the aesthetic of *Cerebus*. The mononymous artist was initially hired by Sim to provide backgrounds and color for a series of "Young Cerebus" short stories that ran in Marvel Comics' short-lived creator-owned anthology series, *Epic Illustrated*, and he joined the monthly book shortly thereafter.

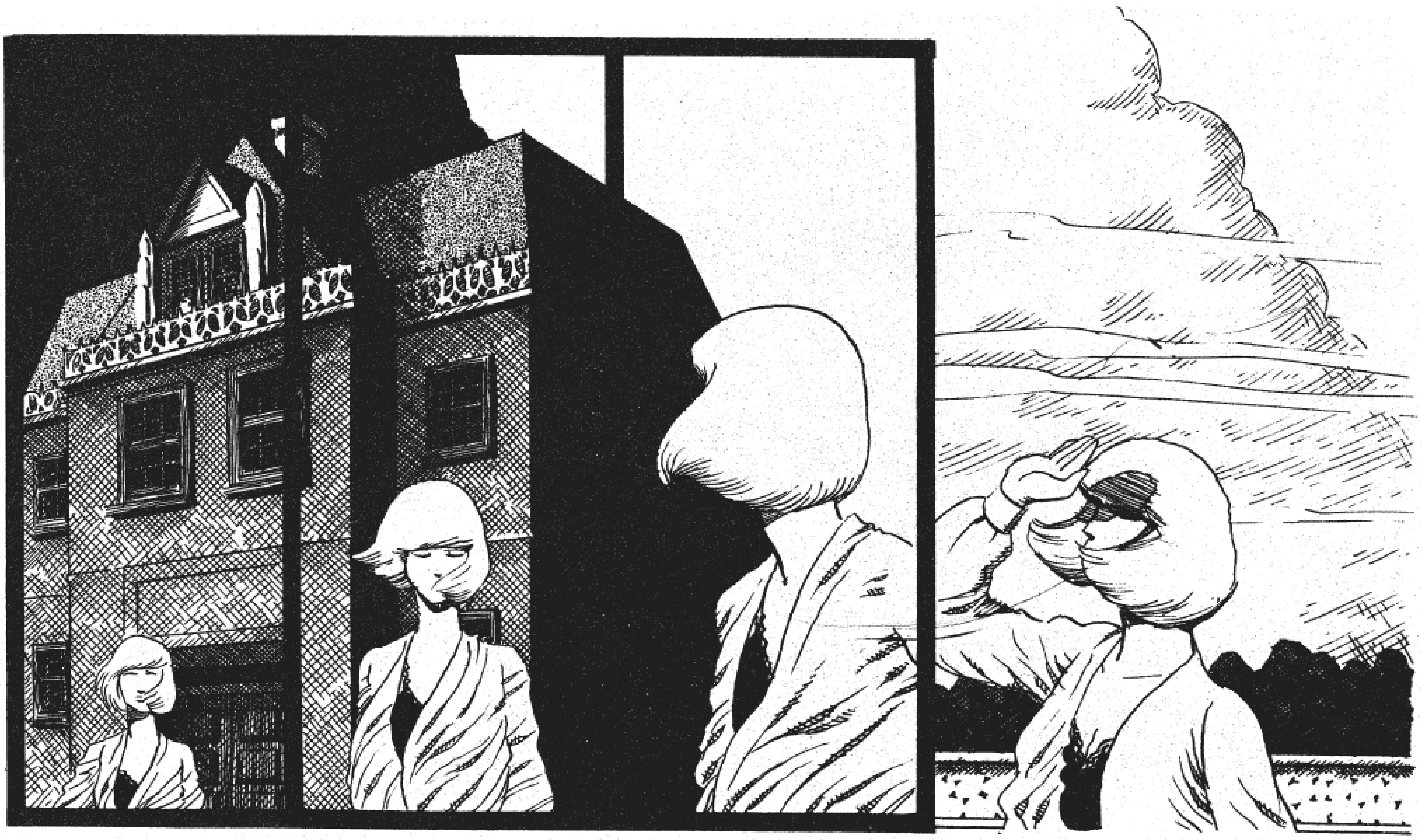
Unlike those masterfully-rendered color outings, Gerhard's early work on the monthly *Cerebus* is tentative and halting, and sometimes betrays an awkwardness with the challenge of working for black and white reproduction. But after just a few months on the book, the two work with an artistic gestalt unprecedented in commercial comics.


NO REASON.
JUST PUT IT DOWN.

This visual shift happens throughout the second half of *Church & State I.* Various techniques are explored, and there's some very early difficulty balancing line weight and texture to produce sufficient contrast to offset the omnipresent gray mechanical tone of the titular character. Then there's the incorporation of the wild variety of rendering techniques Sim himself had used earlier in the series. And finally, an embrace of identity. By issue 74 (page 453 of the present volume), only ten months after Gerhard's first pages on the book, a new synthesized visual style has emerged.

From the beginning Gerhard's color work had a special attention to mass and texture, rendered through a full range of tonal variation. But it takes several months for that to assert itself confidently in his pen and ink and tone work. But when it does, it corresponds with Sim's own loosening of his drawing and mark-making. From this point on, no matter what was happening in the foreground of the books, no matter how expressively and wildly the characters are rendered, they always seem grounded in a reality, capable of exploring and interacting with their richly textured world.


BUT, GREAT CEREBUS-- THE COIN IS YOURS.
WHY WOULD YOU NOT...
NO REASON.
JUST PUT IT DOWN.



The synthesized visual look of the latter third of *Church & State I*, and indeed the majority of the next two books, *Church & State II* and *Jaka's Story*, is of a quality unknown to virtually any other comic. Unlike the majority of black and white North American comics, presented with little more than a contour line and large swaths of Caniff-like black intended to anchor a color layer that will never come, these are fully rendered illustrations with widely varying values and detailed textures, on par with the work of the great pen and ink artists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Of course, you wouldn't always know it from looking at the printed books.

The monthly installments of *Cerebus*, and every collection of the material up to this point, were printed on low-grade newsprint, a highly absorbent substrate that caused enormous amounts of dot gain (the tendency for inks to expand as they hit a surface). The desire for a rich black from these materials exacerbated the problem, oftentimes leaving the final product a muddier, mid-tone-heavy gray very different from the crisply-defined values of the original artwork.

For this edition of *Church & State I*, we've gone back to the source – creating fresh high-resolution scans of the photo negatives that have been used to generate printing plates since the original production of the monthly comic book – and, when possible, replacing those scans with as much original artwork as is available to us. All of these materials were then sorted through and selected on a page-by-page basis, to create a new digital "master" that can be used to produce the book going forward.

It sounds a bit simpler than it actually is.

Although the original artwork contains more detail than ever made it to the page initially, it has aged poorly. Specifically, the mechanical tones used to produce the gray of Cerebus's fur, as well as a multitude of background textures and effects, have shrunk and migrated over time. Every bit of tone on a page sourced from original artwork was in need of some type of adjustment specific to the type of tone and its relationship to the surrounding line art. In the case of iterative patterns (like Cerebus's dot tone), it's a matter of digitally copying and cloning a segment of the exposed pattern, moving it to fill in the gap, and then "erasing" any excess and overlap with the existing areas. With the more random patterns, more varied methods of correction are available.

As of this printing, the original art represents 222 pages total of the finished book. The majority of those pages are still in the possession of the Cerebus Archive, and were scanned by Sim himself for this project. The remainder of the pages had scans generously contributed by their individual, or in some case multiple, owners. To those contributors, we are in debt. This book looks significantly better for their efforts.

The remainder of the pages have been sourced from the original photo negatives, battered from decades of use, but mostly still intact. They were cut off their flats, gently cleaned with isopropyl alcohol, and scanned in high-resolution 16-bit grayscale. Once in the digital realm, the files were sent to San Diego, where they were sharpened, upscaled, and then sharpened again—when applicable, making tonal adjustments to correct for underexposure or overexposure in the initial photography. Finally, they

were painstakingly scrubbed in Photoshop to remove any visible signs of wear and tear, and then resized and flattened to bitmaps, to be dropped into the layout of the book.

In some cases, extreme levels of adjustment were used to bring out information hiding in the densest areas of the negative, always using the (mostly) 30-percent Cerebus tone as a calibration tool to adjust the exposure. In some cases the initial photography was so poorly executed as to make this almost impossible. Issues 66, 67, and 70-73 all seem to have been photographed with a poorly calibrated stat camera, causing all manner of grit and pencil schmutz to be picked up in the photography along with the ink itself. As a consequence, the mechanical tone was clogged and damaged. This has been corrected in part by extreme adjustments meant to separate the intended information from the noise. Though I've been partially successful in this, the hope remains that scans of original artwork continue to trickle in – for these issues in particular – so that future printings can look even better.

Lastly, as you can no doubt tell from the strain on your arms as you hold this mammoth volume, we've upgraded the paper. We've also switched over from web offset presses to the much slower and more exacting process of sheet-fed offset, ensuring a cleaner, more consistent final product, with less "slur" and, crucially, much less dot gain. Also working against the dot gain is the paper – a multifine "woodfree" stock, meaning that the mechanical pulp has been stripped out to leave a less porous, smoother finish surface that naturally absorbs less inks than its newsprint cousins.

I've written a lot here about the aesthetics of the work at hand, and very little, one might argue, about the "content."

That's primarily because a work of graphic art isn't just a summary of its text -- it exists as a complex synthesis of its formal and narrative elements. Describing the "plot" of a work of true graphic literature is akin to summarizing the "narrative" of Stravinsky's *The Firebird Suite*, or criticizing Mozart's *Don Giovanni* for the combination of dramatic and parodic/comedic elements.

Simply put, the work IS the visual. The content IS the aesthetics. And in the realm of aesthetics, the quality of the reproduction matters. It is, in the literal sense, essential.

The "preservation window" available to great works of visual art intended for reproduction is perilously narrow, requiring the right combination of readily available source materials before they can erode, capital via commercial interests and/or a participatory audience, facilitating technology, and a copyright to the work free of legal entanglements. Just as it was Dave Sim's ownership of his work and the patronage of his audience that gave him the creative freedom to follow his wildest ambitions to their conclusions, it is his continued ownership and his audience's patronage that enables this restoration within that window.

Your purchase of *Church & State I* is one more link in that chain.

Sean Michael Robinson
San Diego, CA
August 2015

CEREBUS ORIGINAL ART DRAGNET CONTRIBUTORS

In preparing this new edition, we are indebted to the generous Cerebus art collectors who scanned their artwork to contribute to the project. To contribute your own original artwork to the Cerebus Archive, please contact Sean and Mara at cerebusarthunt@gmail.com. Dave has created a finder's certificate that will be sent to every contributor for each page contributed to the art hunt, as well as to anyone sending a lead that results in the netting of a new page.

Steven Birnbaum –
pg. 573 (Cerebus no. 80 pg. 01)

Jason Crosby, Comic Link –
pg. 203 (Cerebus no. 61 pg. 13)

Justin Eisinger, IDW Publishing –
pg. 262 (Cerebus no. 64 pg. 10)
pg. 348 (Cerebus no. 68 pg. 16)

Jean-Paul Gabilliet –
pg. 419 (Cerebus no. 72 pg. 07)

Lara and Nat Gertler –
pg. 333 (Cerebus no. 68 pg. 01)

Greg Griffin –
pg. 570 (Cerebus no. 79 pg. 18)

James Guarnotta –
pg. 169 (Cerebus no. 59 pg. 19)
pg. 308 (Cerebus no. 66 pg. 16)
pg. 444 (Cerebus no. 73 pg. 12)
pg. 445 (Cerebus no. 73 pg. 13)
pg. 446 (Cerebus no. 73 pg. 14)
pg. 541 (Cerebus no. 78 pg. 09)
pg. 558 (Cerebus no. 79 pg. 06)
pg. 567 (Cerebus no. 79 pg. 15)
pg. 569 (Cerebus no. 79 pg. 17)
pg. 585 (Cerebus no. 80 pg. 13)

Dagon James –
pg. 16 (Cerebus no. 52 pg. 04)
pg. 587 (Cerebus no. 80 pg. 15)
pg. 588 (Cerebus no. 80 pg. 16)

Gregory Kessler –
pg. 95 (Cerebus no. 56 pg. 07)
pg. 282 (Cerebus no. 65 pg. 10)
pg. 296 (Cerebus no. 66 pg. 04)
pg. 571 (Cerebus no. 79 pg. 19)

David Rankin –
pg. 515 (Cerebus no. 77 pg. 03)

Dean Reeves –
pg. 44 (Cerebus no. 53 pg. 16)
pg. 317 (Cerebus no. 67 pg. 05)
pg. 459 (Cerebus no. 74 pg. 07)
pg. 587 (Cerebus no. 80 pg. 15)

Jeremy Shorr, Titan Comics, Dallas, TX –
pg. 152 (Cerebus no. 59 pg. 02)

Oystein Sorensen –
pg. 408 (Cerebus no. 71 pg. 16)
pg. 409 (Cerebus no. 71 pg. 17)
pg. 580 (Cerebus no. 80 pg. 08)
pg. 581 (Cerebus no. 80 pg. 09)

TRAUMA PAGE DONORS

As part of the Cerebus Archive Number Three fundraiser, we solicited support to help fund the restoration of some of the most damaged originals we had access to. In exchange, the donor would receive before and after 11" x 17" prints of the pages, along with a detailed analysis of what work had been done.

The following pages were sponsered by our generous Cerebus Archive Trauma Page supporters.

Beanbag Amerika –
pg. 492 (Cerebus no. 75 pg. 20)
pg. 588 (Cerebus no. 80 pg. 16)

GSquared –
pg. 408 (Cerebus no. 71 pg. 16)

Andrew Lariviere –
pg. 583 (Cerebus no. 80 pg. 11)

Margaret Liss –
pg. 333 (Cerebus no. 68 pg. 01)
pg. 587 (Cerebus no. 80 pg. 15)

Menachem Luchins –
pg. 456 (Cerebus no. 74 pg. 04)
pg. 463 (Cerebus no. 74 pg. 11)

Bill Ritter –
pg. 459 (Cerebus no. 74 pg. 07)

Jeff Seiler –
pg. 580 (Cerebus no. 80 pg. 08)
pg. 581 (Cerebus no. 80 pg. 09)

Damin J. Toell, Esq. –
pg. 454 (Cerebus no. 74 pg. 02)

CEREBUS ARCHIVE NUMBER TWO CONTRIBUTORS

We are indebted to our patrons, Cerebus Archive contributors past and present, who continue to make this project possible. Our many thanks! Contributors to the second Cerebus Archive folio, dubbed CANT, are listed below.

Roberto A.
Ash A.
Truls A.
Ted Adams
Chris Allingham
Damien Alonso-Segal
Don Alsafi
Beanbag Amerika
Andreas
Chuck Armstrong
Adam B.
Ed B.
Gordon B.
John B.
Olav B.
Matthew Barber
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Andrew Bartel
B'jamin da Bass
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